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COVER: Aussie supercross star Chad Reed's leading the AMA SX series as it heads into the home stretch  
© Frank Hoppen

CONTENTS: WFO! Stephen Sward's double moto victory at Langrish was nothing short of astonishing and more than made up for a disappointing start to the Scotsman's season  
© Sully



# COMMENT

I don't know if you lot are as bitter, twisted and downright jealous as me but during the winter months I sometimes get a little – okay, massively – envious of the top riders when they bugger off to warmer climes for training and testing. It certainly doesn't help when Billy Mac's latest column drops into my inbox at 11pm the night before deadline as the rain beats against the office window and we slave away while he's happy as Larry over in SoCal. C'mon, how hard a life can it be? Bit of riding, quick nap, bit of riding, check out chicks in shorts, massage, check out some more chicks...

So I've got to admit taking a perversely sadistic pleasure in watching the MX1 riders roll up to the gate at Canada Heights for their second moto. The weather was horrendous and an already ruined track was by now a sea of schlop as I contemplated watching the start and then bugging off back to the warm and welcoming KTM UK hospitality area for cake and coffee. For whatever reason – maybe I was just enjoying the sight of suffering – I stayed trackside and about midway through the race a thought slapped me round the chops. These guys bloody well deserve their winter training camps. And the ones who don't get to go to SoCal or Spain or Florida bloody well deserve to n'all. Motocross is not an easy way to make a living – it's painful, it's dangerous, it's bloody hard graft and 40 minutes around Canada Heights on a day that's s\*\*\*\*y even by British winter standards takes qualities that I haven't got.

A fortnight later at Langrish it was warm and sunny and dust instead of mud was causing visibility problems. The track itself was mega – a proper old-school circuit carved out of the Hampshire hillside – and the racing did the place justice. In MX2 the Swordy versus Simpson battle raged in both races and, fingers crossed, if both men can stay healthy we're going to have a season-long battle on our hands. Up in MX1 Max Nagl looked ominously quick but after some crappy luck so far it was good to see Billy back on it in race two – if he can find consistency to match his speed and stay focused for two full motos then 2009 could be the year he lives up to his potential in the GPs.

Funnily enough, a week later at the first GP of the season in Faenza it was back to Canada Heights conditions. Italy had been chosen to kick off the championship because it was felt that the weather would be kinder than in Northern Europe. And there's me 1700 miles away, perched on my sofa and glued to Motors TV with the windows open and the blinds down to stop the sun reflecting off the screen as I watched Billy Mac up to his eyeballs in mud. I could almost have been in SoCal...

A couple of days before Faenza the rare sight of a DBR editor astride a motorcycle would have been spotted by visitors to Marshfield as I took the new magazine machine – a WR250F – for a quick blast. I'd picked up the puppy from Yamaha earlier in the day and as I was in the vicinity – well, about 80 miles east – it would've been rude not to burn rubber up the M4 and take advantage of the freshly-graded track. The plan is to do a spot of haring and hounding and even some haring scrambling this summer so keep your eyes open for regular updates and manly poses.

Well that's your lot for my 100th comment (give or take a couple Suttys wrote) – for a selection of my favourite bits over the last eight-odd years give it a flick to page 54 and check out [www.dirtbikerider.com](http://www.dirtbikerider.com)

*Sean*

Shaun Simpson's new neck brace/hydration pack



© Magnus Andersson

© Alex Hodgkinson

## NEWSHOUND!

DEPUTY DAWG'S DIRTY DELIVERY OF OFF-ROAD NEWS...

If you're smart and you've dashed to the newsagents to pick up this copy of DBR as it hits the shelves then A) well done, we love you and B) shouldn't you be on your way to Landrake for the opening round of the Red Bull Pro Nationals that kick off on the Cornish side of the Tamar bridge near Plymouth this weekend?

One of the most spectacular circuits in the UK, Landrake is a fitting venue to host the first round of this exciting new series that takes the UK's best MX1 and MX2 riders then mixes 'em together mixed-capacity class stylee for a day of action-packed racing.

And as an added bonus for race fans who head to any one of the six rounds of the Pro Nats, the MCF boys have come up a brand new concept – although the name for it was born and bred deep inside our editor's head – that will take the top 10 riders from qualifying in the MX1 and MX2 classes and throw them into a two-lap sprint. The Proppa.com Van Slam promises to be absolutely awesome as Britain's fastest riders hang it out for two laps to see who's quickest – more details over the page.

The opening GP of the year was certainly something different as overnight rain turned the fantastico circuito di Faenza into a slippery mudbath. Only one moto in each class was run in the slop before Youthstream called a halt to proceedings. If you watched it for free on the internet at Freecaster TV ([www.freecaster.tv](http://www.freecaster.tv)) or perhaps even flew to Faenza yourself then you may have spotted Shaun Simpson sporting a rather natty drinks system that attached to the rear of his Leatt-Brace. Obviously aware of the need to stay hydrated in the heat of the battle, Simpson is one of the first riders to run this very clever system that goes on sale sometime this month. More details on the USWE – Mobile Drink System of Sweden – can be found online at [www.uswe.se](http://www.uswe.se)

One of the biggest questions to pop up in Faenza after 'where's the 2008 FIM Off-Road Journalist of the year Anthony Sutton?' and 'what's that hanging off Shaun Simpson's neck?' was 'did Gautier Paulin purposefully ride off the track to gain an advantage in the MX2 race?' More than one stranded rider asked this as the fast Frenchman appeared to frequently fly past on the wrong side of the green



netting. In the end no teams protested the fast Frenchie – although KTM seriously considered it – and cheater or not the former European MX and world BMX champion scored the first GP win of his fledgling career. Well done that man!

There was more great news for French motocross fans when Christophe Pourcel – who's been creating quite a commotion across the ocean – sealed and delivered his first ever AMA SX title in the Lites East division. Wrapping up the championship a race early on his Monster Energy Pro Circuit Kawasaki is outstanding enough but when you consider that just 18 months ago the younger of the frighteningly fast and fearless Pourcel brothers was fighting for his life and feared paralysed it's even more amazing.

One man who doesn't look likely to hit the winner's circle any time soon is our favourite Manx man-mountain David Knight who's had a torrid time at the opening rounds of the WEC. We sent DK a text on the Sunday night after round one in Portugal expecting to hear back how he won both days but were very surprised to receive this – 'Full \*\*\*\*! Sixth yesterday, DNF today!' Apparently struggling to find a good set-up with their new bike, the entire BMW team has struggled somewhat and Knight – who had been expected to be in with a good shot of winning the E3 world title – is no different. With three sixth place finishes and that DNF under his belt so far Knight plans to spend the rest of '09 developing his new ride – expect at the very least a day win before the end of the year.

In the British trials championships there's also been a shocker as James Dabill did what everyone thought impossible by beating Dougie Lampkin MBE twice in a row. After scalping the Silsden warrior at round one in Scarborough, Dabill did the deed again at round two at Kinlochleven meaning the Gas Gas rider now sits on a six-point lead in the championship. Amazingly, Dabill was 11 marks behind Dougie after the first lap of three as the 12-time world champ stayed feet-up on the opening lap but Lampkin had a 'mare on laps two and three while the younger Leeds-based rider got his game together to beat Lampkin by three marks at the end of the wet and windy day by the Lochside.

In British motocross news Ross Burrridge – who has been a key member of the Kawasaki Motors UK marketing machine for the last three years – will now take over from Alex Brawn to become the new face of Kawasaki off-road sport in the UK. A former national trials rider and now a keen owner of a KX450F, Burrridge has been tasked with looking after Kawasaki's official British championship MX teams as well as the youth Team Green squad where Ross will put a special emphasis on rider development.

Taking his new role seriously, Ross has already made a significant change to the Kawasaki racing stable by moving Kristian Whatley into the LPE Kawasaki squad. The LPE team had been having a tough time of it so far this year as team manager Steve James lost his wallet at Little Silver before team riders Jamie Smith and Elliot Banks-Browne both bust themselves up leaving just Daniel Arnold and Lewis Rose to fly the LPE flag. Whatley joining the team should increase the mojo levels within the squad and Kristian himself is already feeling very positive about the move.

"Ross Burrridge at KMUK has worked with Steve James to sort this deal out and I am over the moon," says Kristian. "Added to that Elliott Banks-Browne's father, Ian, is set to be my mechanic. He used to spanner for my dad, Jem, so it feels like this deal was meant to be."

It's all smiles too for Steve Turner and the STR Honda boys who have picked up another new sponsor from outside of the industry in the form of delivery company **Parcel2go.com**.

"**Parcel2go.com** is an impressive company which are thriving in an extremely competitive market," said Steve Turner about his new backer. "If you bought an item on Ebay there is a good chance it would be delivered by **Parcel2go.com** however I would guess that a large proportion of the motocross fraternity have never heard of them."

That's about it for now but remember to pilot your PC towards **dirtbikerider.com** for all the latest news, images, wallpapers, video clips as well as some cool competitions and stuff!

**Kristian Whatley's gone to LPE Kawasaki**

26

© Surty



© Eric Kitchan

**Dabill doubles up on Dougie**



**Ross Burrridge is in the hot-seat**



**Happy days for Christophe Pourcel and team**



## WHERE'S CYRIL?

**FIND DESPRES AND WIN A SHARK SKIDDER**

This month thanks to our best buddies at Nevis Marketing we've got another top-of-the-range Shark SXR Cyril Despres replica skid lid worth a whole £229.99 to give away.

With the sort of slyness only a very cunning fox or wily coyote can muster, we've decapitated the French rally raid legend and hidden his disembodied head elsewhere in the pages of this 'ere issue of DBR (the one above is a serving suggestion for illustration purposes only). If you can spot it then you could win the helmet – simple, eh?

All you have to do is locate Cyril's napper and then text the word **DBRCYRIL** followed by a space, the page number, another space and then your name and postcode to **81800**. You'll receive a text back confirming your entry to this competition.\*

Entries close on **May 14** with the first correct entry chosen at random getting the Shark skidder in a size of their choice...

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## GOLDENPAD

**WIN A PAIR OF RENTHAL HANDLEBARS**

If you're going to go bar-to-bar then you better hope the bars in question ain't no soft steel stockers that'll bend quicker than an Argos awning when Hurricane Harry blows through the pits. In fact, you should be wringing reet robust Renthals and now just maybe you can...

Have a close look at our pic of this golden Renthal bar pad, then flick through this month's mag and find the full pic we've taken it from. Once you've found it simply text the word **DBRRENT** followed by a space, the page number it appears on, another space and then your name and postcode to **81800**. You'll receive a text back confirming your entry to this competition.\*

Entries close on **May 14** with the first correct entry chosen at random getting a pair of Renthal handlebars of their choice...





# WIN!WIN!WIN!

CHAD REED THOR KIT UP FOR GRABS!

**H**e's the reigning AMA Supercross champion, right up at the sharp end of the 2009 title hunt and this month's DBR cover star – and now you could wear the same kit as Chad Reed.

The boys from Thor-importers Madison are pretty pumped to say the least with the way the Thunder from Down Under has been taking the fight to pre-season favourite James Stewart this year. So to celebrate the Aussie's awesome performance in the stadia of the US of A (and Canada) they've stumped up a set of his Victory kit – that's gloves, pants and jersey – worth thruppence shy of £200.

And to top all that off they're chucking a Pro-Circuit lid and a pair of Ally goggles into the pot taking the value of the prize up to a whopping **£449.95!**

To be in with a shout of winning the lot all you need to do is answer the following simple question. In Norse mythology Thor is the god of thunder but what is his mighty weapon?

- Is it
- A: A sword
  - B: A double-headed axe
  - C: A hammer
  - D: A cordless drill with hammer action

Think you know the answer? Okay, power-up your PC and go straight to **www.dirtbikerider.com** where you need to follow the competition link, type in your answer, fill out the fields and hit transmit. Entries close **May 14** with the first correct entry chosen totally at random getting the gear...

**MADISON:SR**



# MCFOK!

TOP PRIZE PACKAGES  
FOR SIZZLING SERIES

The MC Federation have teamed up with Fox Racing Europe to give the country's next generation of MX heroes a leg up the ladder with a Fox-supported ride as one of their sponsored riders.

At each round of the MCF Red Bull Elite Youth Cup a panel of judges will select three riders without a clothing deal who they feel deserve a little extra help. The 'Fox Three' will comprise one rider from 65-85cc, one from 125-250cc and a final wildcard who can bring something special to the party.

The three chosen riders will be announced at the end of the day and they'll be rewarded with an exclusive 'Fox Boot Camp Pro plate' and given a Fox clothing deal for the next race. When they show up at the following race they'll get a fully printed kit with their name, number, Red Bull Elite Youth Cup and Fox Boot Camp logos. Their pictures will also appear on the Elite Youth Cup and Fox Europe websites.

With eight rounds of the Red Bull Elite Youth Cup that makes 24 riders who'll be selected for the 'Fox Boot' camp. Those riders will then get an invite to an exclusive track day with a handful of top pros where a panel of MCF, Fox Racing Europe staff and pro riders will choose two riders to become fully-supported Fox athletes in 2010.

Always looking for new and innovative ways to reward their riders, MCF have also lined up a great prize for the adult stars of their Red Bull Pro National series – a fully tricked-out and insured van for the 2010 season thanks to a great deal with car accessory daddies Proppa.com!

The Proppa.com Van Slam will be a two-lap sprint race before the main Red Bull Pro races kick off. Directly after qualifying the top 10 fastest riders from the MX1 and MX2 class will go straight to the gate for a feast of bar-banging. Points will be awarded down to last position and the rider with the most points at the end of the year will be handed over the keys to their new ride by Proppa.com's Adam Weaver at the final round at Wakes Colne on **September 13**.

"I'm delighted to be working with the MC Federation with such a great concept in place and actively be giving something directly to the riders who'll be putting on a show," says Adam. "For Proppa.com it's ideal as it shows what we can offer anyone in tricking out their vehicle, no matter what it is. I have an active interest in racing with our partnership with STR Honda and I shall certainly watch this race with interest."

MCF Chairman Matt Bates is equally as excited by the idea. "Professional racers want to win no matter what but a lot can happen in a race and you have to use track craft over 30 minutes. When it's hell for leather for two laps though all that goes out of the window."

The first Proppa.com Van Slam takes place at the opening round of the Red Bull Pro Nationals at Landrake, Cornwall, on April 19. Remember to get there early – you don't want to miss this one. Two laps go quick, very quick!

## CALENDAR

### RED BULL ELITE YOUTH CUP

<b>Landrake *</b>	April 18/19
<b>Thorsway</b>	May 9/10
<b>Whitby *</b>	June 6/7
<b>Cusses Gorse</b>	July 4/5
<b>Wakes Colne</b>	August 8/9
<b>Canada Heights *</b>	August 15/16
<b>Pontrilas</b>	September 5/6
<b>TBA</b>	October 3/5

\* Incorporates with the Red Bull Pro Nationals

### RED BULL PRO NATIONAL

<b>Landrake, Cornwall</b>	April 19
<b>Whitby, Yorkshire</b>	June 7
<b>Canada Heights, Kent</b>	July 19
<b>Canada Heights, Kent</b>	August 16
<b>Pontrilas, Hereford</b>	August 30
<b>Wakes Colne, Essex</b>	September 13



# GORDON CROCKARD

## ALIVE HE CRIED!

HE CAME CLOSE TO KICKING THE BUCKET BUT GORDY'S HOME IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND PLANNING HIS RETURN TO RACING...

Words by Gordon Crockard Photo by Suttly

So, yeah, I'm alive! Nearly wasn't about a month ago though! Ha ha! The Hawkstone International was nearly the end of me as I got wiped out in a very, very fast first turn start straight smash. I broke four ribs, four vertebrae, a collarbone and my spleen was burst completely into mush. Straight to hospital and CT scanned immediately to find the problems as above. Defibrillators were on hand once they realised I had five litres of my blood in my stomach and emergency surgery to remove my spleen commenced.

I went into the High Dependency Unit after theatre where I remained for five days to get in a stable state before spending another few days in the ward before getting discharged once well enough. That was all in Shrewsbury Royal Hospital and as I had a grand total of nine fractures when I left the ward travelling across land and sea to get to my home in Northern Ireland wasn't going to happen for a few weeks. So I stayed with my good friend Scott Probert in Kilderminster until I was well enough to travel home.

I got home last week and to be truthful I am exhausted of talking through my injury story to people. I could fill pages in DBR of what went on and how I am now but I don't reckon it's fresh news anymore and I'm over thinking about it.

While lying in hospital I decided to make a few changes to how I live my life and I didn't hang about at getting some plans made. I had never been to any big-game football or rugby matches so with the Six Nations rugby final coming up at the Millennium Stadium between Ireland and Wales I did my best to seek, find and buy some tickets for the match. And so I did just that and attended the historic match where Ireland took the Grand Slam and the Six Nations championship. I will never forget that experience.

The following day I went to Langrish to watch the second round of the British MX championship and I can tell you that by the time I had taken in both those events I was total scrap. Energy levels are somewhat less due to my injuries and the problem lies with my stubbornness to let the injuries change what I want to do.

Everyone is very quick to put on their doctor's head and preach to me how much I should be taking it easy and resting etc but I'm so not interested in that logic and firmly believe my body responds to the stresses and strains I put on it. It has always responded by becoming stronger to any stress I put it under. Sure, if I get tired I'll rest. If I get sore I'll stop what I'm doing that is making it sore.

One day I believe I will be 100 per cent again and back racing bikes harder than ever. Sure it sucks what has happened and some folks disagree with getting back onboard a bike to race. I don't care about what anybody thinks. It's me that has had to go through all

this crap and I have a large score to settle with motocross as it has currently gotten the better of me so far in '09. I am determined to leave MX with a happy ending. I look at it like a hangover – everybody has had such a bad hangover at some stage that they cry 'never again' and sure enough come the following weekend they're flat-out back on the sauce. I see my injury with the same mentality – the little suffering I'm experiencing now is a scratch considering the fun that bikes have brought me and will continue to bring me in the future.

I'm not married and have no children which makes me pretty consequence-free when it comes to smashing myself up like I did. Yes, my family and friends had to see me hurt which I didn't like them to have to do but they're not my dependants.

While recovering I will actively be supporting MX and following what's going on. Last Saturday I went to Desertmartin to watch the opening round of the Irish championship and was very pleased to see how our sport is growing to a higher level. Those boys were on it! Seriously, they are not hanging about at all. I have never ever been a spectator at an Irish championship before and I was proud to see the passion and emotion that the riders were applying to their laps. I was thinking 'holy crap, where would I actually finish if I were out there?' so keep up the belief boys!

The first GP at Faenza was awful as I'm sure a lot of you watched on the TV. So boring and uninteresting to watch. The wash-out weather completely destroyed the entire event. Such a shame. Imagine paying 10 grand to ride around in that! I was so glad I wasn't there on that line, 10K down and riding that mud nonsense.

Right folks, I'm off to bed. I sleep pure rubbish these days as I'm very sore when I lie down. Plus I've some extremely weird thermostat irregularities going on every night. I wake up most nights at 4am or so absolutely soaking wet with sweat. Like really, really soaking wet. I have to completely change beds. It's to do with my blood transfusion process side-effects. I sleep very little at the moment so I'm actually typing this at 3.25am. Hence needing to head off to bed. Weirdo you're thinking, right? But don't think I lie about all day doing nothing because I don't. Physio at 10am tomorrow. Plus, I was relying on my main income being the prize money and PAR Honda bonus rewards. So now I'm not racing, I'm not exactly earning too much. This drives me to having to look to other ways to bring some money in the door and also find a lifestyle which lets me live as conservatively as possible. So I am busy – believe me on that!

Thanks to all the kind people who contacted me with their well wishes and support to recover from my injuries.



# GPAGO-GO!

MXGP ACTION RETURNS TO MALLORY PARK IN MAY

In just over one month's time – **May 30/31** to be precise – world championship motocross returns to the UK as Mallory Park in Leicestershire hosts the seventh round of the FIM MX1 and MX2 championships, round three of the Veteran's World Cup and round two of the Supermoto S1 and S2 series as well. It's gonna be an action-packed weekend for sure and one not to be missed! After providing a plethora of exciting race action at last year's event the Mallory Park circuit will be revamped to offer even more alternative lines and passing places which – in theory at least – means the action should be oh-so much hotter in 2009!

Discounted tickets for the event are on sale now through the official website – [www.britishmxgp.com](http://www.britishmxgp.com) – or by calling **01873 840640**. As a rough guide to prices an adult's weekend ticket bought in advance will cost £40 instead of £60 on the gate, a child's advance ticket is half price at £8 and then there are some sweet family deals to be had too! Camping prices vary from £35 for a four-adult campsite pitch to £100 for a place in the Platinum campsite – there are family specific camping areas too for those who want a quieter night's sleep. All the pricing info is there in black and white on the website so check it out if you have any queries but remember advance tickets and campsite bookings can only be made until **May 23**.

As well as two full days of race action – plus let's not forget Friday's supermoto practice sessions – there'll be a whole heap of extra activities going down including rocking bands, fairground rides, trade stands and a bunch more stuff that we can't remember right now.

Mallory Park is a piece of pish to find and is situated slap bang in the centre of the country eight miles west of Leicester and 12 miles to the north of Coventry. It's also well signposted from junction 21 of the M1 so short of your head dropping off there's bugger all reason for you not to be there!



## WIN!WIN!WIN!

FIVE PAIRS OF GP TICKETS UP FOR GRABS!

If there's one thing better than owning a pair of tickets for the British MX GP then it's owning a pair of tickets for the British MX GP that you've won for free. And because we're such cool cats here at DBR we're gonna offer five of our loyal – and great looking, obviously – readers the chance to win a pair of tickets splendidly donated to us by the good guys at RHL. To be in with a chance of winning all you have to do is tell us who won the MX1 class at the British GP in 2008?

**Was it:**  
**A:** Jonathan Barragan  
**B:** Jonny Briggs  
**C:** Barry Briggs  
**D:** Barry Manilow

Once you've worked out the answer text the word **DBRMXGP** followed by a space, your answer, another space and then your name and postcode to **81800**. You'll receive a text back confirming your entry to this competition.\*

Entries close on **May 14** with the first five correct answers chosen randomly winning one pair of tickets each.

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#### SUBSCRIPTIONS

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Europe £49.30  
Rest of the world £65

#### PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY

JP Off-road

#### PRINTED IN ENGLAND BY

PCP, Telford

#### CIRCULATION

Seymour, 86 East Poultry St, London W1T 3EX

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Copies of DBR can be obtained each month by placing a Standing Order with your newsagent. In case of difficulty, contact our Subscriptions Department. Readers in USA and Canada may call Eastern News toll-free on 800-221-3148 to locate your nearest stockist.

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## STEPHEN SWORD

### WAITING GAME!

SWORDY'S SMURF IS DUE ANY DAY NOW BUT UNTIL HE ARRIVES THERE'S SOME RACING AND STUFF TO TAKE CARE OF...

Words by Stephen Sword Photo by Suttly

**W**ell what a month it's been for me! I'll start with the Wednesday before Canada Heights. I'm working out in the gym when I get a call over the tannoy that there's a phonecall for me. Yes, it's Jodie – she'd started going into labour and we're only 32 weeks so way too early. We rush to Hampshire where they give her the steroids for the baby's lungs and a drip that manages to stop him coming just yet. That was a close call but thanks to all the great medical staff it was okay and Smurf is still cooking away.

I now had to get focused for the first British round at Canada Heights. I didn't have the best start in the first race so I had to come through the pack. I came third and I could tell I was riding tight and could not relax so it was not the best start to the day. In the second race I went down in a pile-up so it was hard work getting through to fourth but I just had to get the best result possible. Throughout the day I couldn't relax on the bike – something I don't normally struggle with. So I spoke with the team and decided I needed to do a bit more testing on my race bike. Overall, I came third on the day so at least I got on the podium and had some much needed points but I wasn't overly happy.

The following weekend we had off from racing so I was able to get a lot more prepared and the team came back so I could do some more testing on the race bike and suspension. We did all this at Marshfield. At the end of it I was feeling really good on the bike again so my head was ready for the following weekend at Langrish.

Now that the bike was ready and I was riding strong I was able to do the finishing touches to the baby's nursery and get all the last-minute bits for him. He's due on April 14 so not long now and I can't wait – I'm getting bored of seeing him move in Jodie's stomach. I'm definitely ready for his arrival, it seems like she has been pregnant forever but that's the thing with IVF – you see him as a two-day-old cell which is mad.

Then it was Langrish – I was feeling so good and my only goal was to win. Going there on the Sunday I felt strong and confident. It started off great when I took pole position in timed practice – the track was in great condition and the turnout was also really good. In the first race I was right behind Simpson and felt good and knew I was not on the limit so I sat back and watched his lines and waited. Then on the last lap I made my move and finished first. It was a great race to watch and that was the same in the second so I ended

up taking two wins which put me on the top of the podium with only a two-point difference from Simpson in the championship. I really could not have had a better day! It also helped me mentally for the GP which was the following weekend.

On the way home my team-mate Graeme was driving as he now lives right by me and decided to race Sean and Suttly in the DBR van (that's TranDawg™) down the A34. They had more top-end but we were quicker in the corners (okay, Graeme almost tipped his van). He then tried to do TranDawg™ around the outside of a long sweeper but Suttly made himself wide, dropped the hammer and smoked Graeme's young Irish ass! So even after the race I still find myself racing but in a van with a crazy 17-year-old not wanting to lose!

The first GP finally arrived and on the Saturday the track looked mega – it was so fast that there was not much in the time difference for anyone so it was going to be important to get a good start. We all race together now for qualifying and off the start there were a few riders who went down and, yes, I got caught in it. I couldn't believe it – I was 26th coming around the first corner so I needed to get my head down and work hard. By the end I was 14th which considering the start I was okay with.

That evening it started to rain and when Sunday arrived it hadn't stopped so in practice we were all more than a minute slower than on the Saturday. Well, what can I say about the race? It was bloody wet but I managed to get to third and stay there for some time until 10 minutes from the end when a rider pulled out in front of me going up the hill and I clipped his handlebars and went down. After that I couldn't start the bike. So after all that I ended up 17th which is not the start you want at the first GP but with the conditions it was a lottery. After that it was cancelled as the start straight was so bad they had to pull a bike out of the mud. Extreme sport!

I'm really looking forward to Bulgaria as I love the track so fingers crossed that will go much better for me. Next time I do the column I'll be a dad so wish me luck being in the room with the missus when she gives birth – she can be a psycho at the best of times! Oh and dad, next time you leave the airport make sure you have enough fuel – becoming a member of the AA on the roadside is a mission and expensive!

Stay safe and enjoy your riding...

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# MEET THE PARENTS!

FOR OUR FINAL UNSUNG HEROES WE HOOK UP WITH  
LYNNE AND STUART NUNN – AKA CARL'S MUM AND DAD...

Words and photo by JP O'Connell

**B**ehind the vast majority of successful motocrossers – and behind all of the next generation of racers – are people who give up their time and money because of their love of the sport. Without them we wouldn't even be here so let's give an extra big cheer for the mums and dads...

**DBR:** Introduce yourselves to us...

**SN:** "I'm Stuart, this is my wife Lynne and we are the parents of Carl Nunn. I've been involved in motocross all of my life, hence Carl followed on."

**DBR:** What do you do for a living?

**SN:** "Since I gave up racing I have spent my life constructing and running motocross tracks. I built WildTracks in Chippenham as well as Motoland at Mildenhall and I'm in the process of opening a new track at Mepal."

**LN:** "I work for the National Autistic Society working with vulnerable adults."

**DBR:** How old was Carl when he started riding?

**SN:** "People think he was really young but to be honest he was a little scared of it all to start with. I held him back a little until I packed up riding myself when I was 28 which would have made Carl about eight. Unfortunately, he broke his leg almost immediately and had to take a year off so really he was more like nine."

**DBR:** A little bird told us you have a SX claim to fame...

**SN:** (Laughing) "Yes, I rode in the first ever US SX in Anaheim. I didn't win it though – I finished ninth on a 360CZ. I also won the U21 British championship, was a regular top four in the British championship and one of my claims to fame is that I rode for England in the Trophee and Motocross des Nations in 1974."

**LN:** "I knew nothing about motocross before I met Stuart. At the first meeting I went to I have to admit I wasn't very impressed because he came off and was coughing up blood! He'd bruised his lung and I was thinking 'I don't really want you to do this!'"

**DBR:** Do you have any other children.

**LN:** "Carl has an older sister, Melanie."

**DBR:** Is she interested in motocross?

**LN:** "No, not any more. When she was younger she used to come to the races with us but once she got to 16 she wanted to do her own thing."

**DBR:** When Carl was younger how much of your time was spent travelling to and from the races?

**SN:** "God it was scary! From the age of nine Carl was supported by Alec Wright at Team Green and one of the stipulations was that they would supply bikes and parts but we were expected to do the travelling. Carl did well at school and other than when he competed in the European championships never missed any – consequently we wouldn't be able to leave until 4pm on a Friday."

"Sometimes it would be a two-day event at Brampton (Cumbria) or Desertmartin (Ireland) and would mean that we travelled through the night, me driving and Carl sleeping. I think that education is an important part of the motocross discipline."

**DBR:** Is it easy to ensure your other children don't feel left out?

**SN:** "I won't lie, it isn't easy. Carl's sister is three years older than him so all of her friends in the paddock moved up to race adult while Carl was still racing schoolboy and that's where things started getting tricky."

"Financially Carl was never a burden to us as fortunately we had the Team Green backing so that was never an issue between them. I think the problems arise with the love and affection you give them. When Melanie used to come to the racing everything was great but once she stopped – well let's just say I should have noticed the problems. Luckily they both get on great now."

**LN:** "It's very, very difficult when one sibling has a lot of time devoted to them. You are always trying to make it up and you end up over compensating. You can't help but feel guilty no matter what you do."

**DBR:** Describe what a typical race weekend would involve...

**SN:** "Lynne and I had it sorted in that she would take care of this end and I would take care of that end. By that I mean she would get the van all loaded up on the Thursday for us, then I would pick Carl up from school on the Friday and drive to wherever we were going."

## PROPROBE!

NEXT MONTH...GRILL  
SHAUN SIMPSON >>

*Have you ever queued at an awning with a great question for your favourite rider only to let yourself down at the vital moment with a tongue tied load of rubbish? Starting next month our new feature will make it easy for you to get the answers you so desire along with the chance of winning a prize – double bonus!*

*Each month one of your favourite riders will be taking the time to answer some of your questions and hand-picking their favourite. For your chance to ask British champion Shaun Simpson anything you want and possibly win his signed goggles from Langrish simply fire your question off to [dbrrprobe@googlemail.com](mailto:dbrrprobe@googlemail.com) – remember to enter the rider's name in the subject field and don't forget to include your postal address and a daytime telephone number.*

"When Carl was riding 100s at about 13, Geoff Walker [yep, that Geoff Walker] came onto the scene and proved instrumental in Carl's success. He ended up living with us for three years and took over my role, preparing the bikes, preparing Carl, taking him practising – took him off my hands basically. I would encourage this with anyone, I mean dad can get a bit claustrophobic with the boy – do you know what I mean?"

**DBR:** What age was Carl when you thought he was good enough to make it?

**SN:** "That's a difficult question, I think it was probably when Geoff got involved. Up until then he could take it or leave it but that's when he started taking it really seriously."

**LN:** "Carl was also very good at basketball and ended up breaking a finger playing it when he was 16. He missed the last round of that season's European championships because of it so a decision had to be made and motocross won through."

**DBR:** Were you a 'schoolboy dad' when he was younger?

**SN:** (Laughing) "Oh I've certainly been accused of it but you'd have to ask Carl that wouldn't you! There were a few times we had an uproar when he was younger but he gets pissed off enough at himself without me going on at him."

**DBR:** What advice would you give to the parents of any other up and coming prospects?

**SN:** "In my opinion kids don't need to be on it all of the time, they need to have a normal life as well. I run my track and I will see eight to 10-year-olds there two or three times a week. How are they getting out of school? They need to realise how important an education is. I think that with the way the motocross scene is at the moment they should go out and ride at the weekends and enjoy themselves, not get too excited by it all because at the end of it there isn't a lot of money."

**LN:** "I would say to take your time and make sure that your child can ride the bike properly before racing. You don't have to be racing immediately – spend your time practising to start with, you want them to be all-rounders and you can't buy experience."



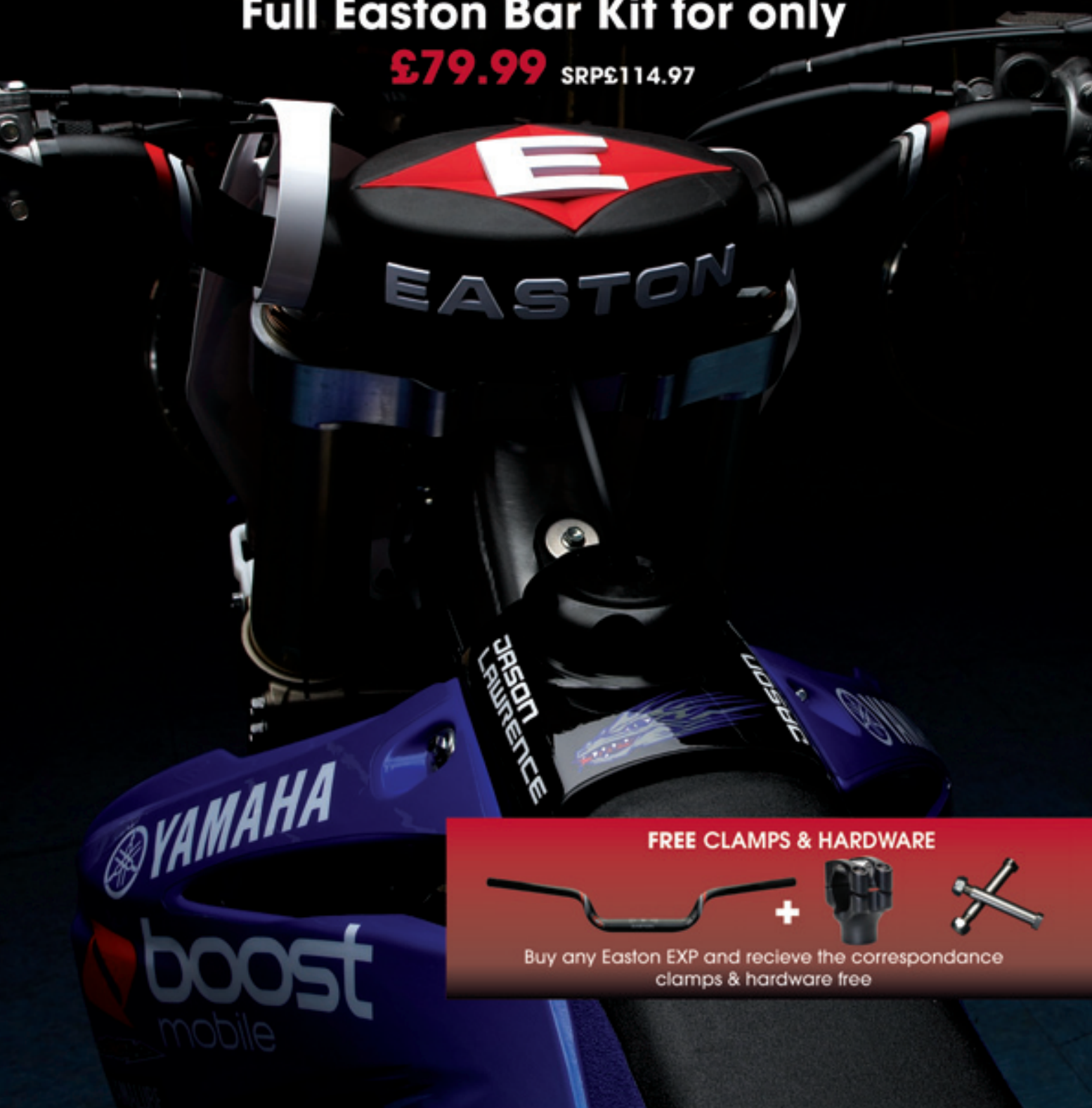


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# MAGEE'S MEN!

SLAPPERS, SLIPPERS, P\*\*\*\*D-UP PIRATES AND MESSY MONKS – THIS MONTH'S BLOKE TEST IS BETWEEN KTM UK'S STEPHEN SWORD AND JAKE NICHOLLS...

Words by JP O'Connell Photo by rayarcher.com

**A**fter getting trapped in the paddock at Langrish, what better way to kill time than enjoying the hospitality of the KTM UK team and firing inane questions at Swordy and The Reverend...

**DBR:** Who would play you in a film of your life?

**SS:** "It would have to be Sean Connery."

**JN:** "I'd say Jim Carey."

**DBR:** When did you last clean an air filter?

**SS:** (Laughing) "That was more recent than I'd have liked! It was January and we had run out of pre-oiled ones so I cleaned one then. Actually, it was about five."

**JN:** "On Thursday I cleaned about five of them at home, I do all of that sort of stuff myself."

**DBR:** Could you check your own valve clearances?

**SS:** "Ummm, no because I've never had to do it before – but I can change a big end though!"

**JN:** "No, not at all. I could take it all off but I wouldn't know what I was looking at."

**DBR:** Have you ever eaten anything you've killed?

**SS:** "Maybe something that my dad has killed as he shoots pheasants. I don't tend to kill things and eat them – I prefer to go to the supermarket."

**JN:** "Yeah, pheasant, pigeon and fish. I did have a think about cooking a rabbit but I didn't like the look of it."

**DBR:** How many bones have you broken?

**SS:** "At a rough guess I'd say about 10, maybe more."

**JN:** "It's 21 or 22 I think."

**DBR:** Can you eat spaghetti without a spoon?

**SS:** "I don't even use a spoon, I just cut it up first."

**JN:** "I don't bother twizzling it, I just cut it up and stuff it in there."

**DBR:** Something you eat that you know you shouldn't?

**SS:** "I'm partial to a little dessert once a week, apple pie."

**JN:** "Mum's got these Easter eggs sat out on the kitchen table at the minute, it's really annoying as I can't help eating them."

**DBR:** Do you own a pair of slippers?

**SS:** "Yep, I got them for Christmas. I never wear them though, well maybe a couple of times! They're not good for my ankle."

**JN:** "No way! They're for gays!"

**DBR:** You're in second and on the leader's rear wheel – do you take him out in the last corner for the win?

**SS:** "It depends on the circumstances – do I need it for the championship? Is money is riding on it? It's not something I would normally do but if I had to I would."

**JN:** "Yeah, you've got to really – no questions asked. I'd expect the same thing in return."

**DBR:** What's the highlight of your career so far?

**SS:** "I've had quite a few – my first British title, first GP podium, first GP win and then the first GP overall."

**JN:** "A couple of weeks ago getting second in a British championship moto was pretty cool and getting 11th in last year's South African GP was like 'wow'."

**DBR:** What car do you drive?

**SS:** "I've got a Vauxhall Vivaro and a 3 series BMW."

**JN:** "I've got a Vito van and I also get to rag around a Navara that we have at home."

**DBR:** And if money were no object?

**SS:** "It's probably going to be a Ferrari to be honest."

**JN:** "A Lamborghini Gallardo."

**DBR:** Have you ever blamed a poor result on a non-existent 'mechanical' issue?

**SS:** "No, not that I can recall..."

**JN:** "I never blame it on the bike because I've got a real good mechanic. I don't blame it on anything other than myself."

**DBR:** Have you ever been arrested?

**SS:** "No."

**JN:** "No but I've been pretty close here and there."

**DBR:** If you could change anything about yourself what would it be?

**SS:** "Probably to be a little bit taller."

**JN:** "My left knee bends when I run so it would be nice if that was sorted and I would also like to be able to straighten my left arm again."

**DBR:** What's the most embarrassing thing you've done while drunk?

**SS:** "Being dressed as Jack Sparrow, vomiting on the pavement in Exmouth – it was all DT's fault!"

**JN:** "I was at my sister's party dressed as a monk and basically I s\*\*\*t myself I was that drunk. My mate and mum had to put me in the bath. There are all sorts of stories as to how or why it happened but I really have no recollection of the truth!"

**DBR:** If you could meet any person – dead or alive – who would it be?

**SS:** "Nothing too serious, maybe have Jonathan Ross over for dinner and have a craic with him."

**JN:** "Barry Sheene, he was awesome."

**DBR:** If you were shipwrecked on an island what three things would you want with you?

**SS:** "Jodie, a compass and a knife."

**JN:** "A knife, a motorbike and a brunette with massive bolt-ons – I could live on that!"

**DBR:** What's your favourite film?

**SS:** "Sean Connery in the Bond films."

**JN:** "The Band of Brothers series."

**DBR:** What's your most annoying habit?

**SS:** "If I only wear my jeans for maybe an evening I won't put them in the wash but on the chest at the end of our bed. I end up with a huge pile of clothes there which annoys Jodie ever so slightly! Oh and I mustn't forget missing the toilet in the middle of the night!"

**JN:** "It's got to be farting because I do it way too often. Farting and cup-caking people [farting in your hand and putting it in someone's face]."

**DBR:** Do you have any fears or phobias?

**SS:** "Not really."

**JN:** "I'm not fond of heights but that's about it."

**DBR:** What's your most prized possession?

**SS:** "He's not here yet but he's coming."

**JN:** "Loved ones and my little Jack Russell Percy."

**DBR:** Have you ever been in a fight?

**SS:** "Only one which was on the school bus!"

**JN:** "Plenty when I was at school but I haven't had one for quite a while so there's probably one building up!"

**DBR:** Is winning a race better than sex?

**SS:** "It's cheaper! But I'd say they are the same."

**JN:** "Yeah, way better."

**DBR:** How do you have your steak?

**SS:** "Medium."

**JN:** "Very well done – I'm not a big fan of steak really."

**DBR:** Something about yourself that nobody knows?

**SS:** "I enjoy cooking and watch the cooking channels on Sky."

**JN:** "I train harder than anyone – guaranteed!"



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# FULL HOUSE!

THERE'S NO SIGN OF THE DREADED CREDIT CRUNCH AT DESERTMARTIN WHERE OVER 300 RIDERS LINE UP FOR THE FIRST ROUND OF THE IRISH CHAMPIONSHIP...

Words by Stevie Mills Photo by Suttty

**Y**ou could be forgiven for thinking that the credit crunch is a much-hyped new chocolate bar because with over 300 entries and a sea of new bikes round one of the Irish championship at Desertmartin was awash with the trappings of success! Let's hope the trend of full gates continues well into the summer months...

With four motos, three winners and battles throughout the day in every class – right down to last place – it was the best racing I've witnessed in a long time. English visitors Scott Probert and Alex Snow made the early running but Snow hit the deck and Probert just had no answer to the pressure heaped on him by reigning Irish champ Wayne Garrett in the first moto.

After a slow start Garrett set about the job in hand and one by one pounced on his rivals, taking many a scalp on the way to an important 'statement win'. It must also be noted that Wayne nursed his rapidly deteriorating 450 KTM across the finish – for the final two laps smoke could be seen trailing behind his TSR KTM and it was experience more than luck that helped man and machine to the flag.

Both Moto-One teamsters – Hammy Hamilton and Tommy Merton – had their moments and Hamilton made an impressive charge from 15th to third at the flag.

In the second race armed with a borrowed bike, Wayne looked extremely under-powered and only made ground towards the end of the 25-minute plus race as the fast pace started to take its toll. One rider in particular who had no signs of fatigue was TM factory-supported Stuart Edmonds. The Dublin lad won the second race in fine style, making amends after a crash in the first race robbed him of vital points.

So it's super-tight with six points separating the first seven places! Garrett and Edmonds tie on 38 points apiece, Probert's one point adrift (although it's unlikely he'll compete in the entire series) with Hammy in fourth, a mere point in front of Gary Gibson aboard a Watt Kawasaki 450.

The Irish MX2 races were a slugging match from second to 35th position and every point was fought for tooth and nail – except for the win! That was a strictly Graeme Irwin affair, the always-smiling KTM UK man blitzing a near 30-second lead inside five laps before easing off due to a pump. So Irwin leads from Garrett and Edmonds in joint second and Oliver Sandiford Smith fourth overall with Tommy Merton fifth. Natalie Kane qualified in 15th position and was riding well, unfortunately two DNFs left the MVR-D Suzuki lass pointless – let's hope that her luck changes real soon.

Let's take a look at the local lads in the British

championship after two rounds. The ultra-competitive MX2 class is awash with GP contenders – apparently nobody told Irwin this! The young KTM UK rider finds himself well inside the prestigious top 10 after the first two rounds – seventh to be precise.

Relentless Suzuki racer and all-round good guy Martin Barr has begun to shake off the effects of a pre-season SX crash, although a DNF in the first MX2 moto of the season has hampered his points tally. But a couple of steady races at round two have lifted Barty to 10th spot – expect strong finishes from the Larne rider over the next few months as he finds fitness and form. It was no mistake that he was third in the British championship at the end of last season.

On to British MX1 now and although the

round McCammond is in sixth and Smyth seventh but I do seem to remember a certain Edward Allingham and Graeme Irwin winning this championship over the past two seasons so no pressure there boys!

Near on six weeks after an accident that may have sent a lesser mortal to join the ranks of the angels and most certainly would have retired the most hardened masochist on the planet, GC is planning a Rocky Balboa style return to work! Word has it that GC will be back in the saddle early summer – we are all looking forward to his return.

Donemana will host the traditional Easter two-day Ulster championship extravaganza. Another sand-based circuit, the track cuts up into one of the roughest circuits on the MX calendar.

Martin Barr's showing signs of getting back to full fitness



Crock Star is out for the moment Wayne and Stuart have made the trip across the pond to play with the big boys and have had some success for their efforts.

Wayne was pipped out of a qualification spot at round one so he left his brain back in the toolbox and qualified with ease at round two, taking enough points over the day to post 26th in the series. Stuart qualified for both rounds but needs to find consistency and score points in both races if he is to break into the top 20.

Our young guns in the MX2 are keeping the home fires burning and TSR KTM team rider Michael McCammond is fast becoming a name to watch for the future, as is young Steven Smyth on the G Force Suspension Honda. After one

It's jump-littered and super-fast with severe changes in elevation to test the resolve and skill of the very best riders in the country. Ulster Premier MX1 will kick off on Easter Monday and the smaller MX2 class takes to the somewhat used track on Easter Tuesday.

The fair city of Cork will host round two of the Irish championships. The ex-GP circuit at Vernon Mount is a favourite of many of the old school riders with its off-cambered corners and hardpack going – if the rain stays away! To do well in Cork demands more than just speed and determination – track craft is key to a podium finish here.

Catch you all next month...

*Stevie*  
dirtbikerider 23



[illegible]

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Antoine Meo takes  
on the challenge of  
the Super Test



## STOP THE ROT!

NICE TRY BUT NO THANKS – WRC STYLE SUPER TESTS HAVE NO PLACE IN THE WORLD ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP

Words and photo by Jonty Edmunds

**W**hen it was announced that selected rounds of the World Enduro Championship would feature experimental Friday night Super Tests during '09, many within the WEC paddock were sceptical. With '08 a great season thanks to numerous 'proper' events that delivered challenging special tests, largely good organisation and a varied mix of terrain, the introduction of a gimmick such as a Super Test didn't sit well with some.

Now that the opening two rounds of the '09 WEC series have passed – both of which included Super Tests – many hope never to see the ridiculous, man-made stages ever again. Here's why...

The fun and games started at the opening round of the series in Portugal. With teams no longer able to enjoy a little down time on Friday afternoons ahead of their busy WEC weekends, as evening drew closer it seemed no-one – FIM officials included – were exactly sure how the Super Test would fit into the proceedings. What was clear was that series promoter Alain Blanchard didn't care what anyone else thought – as far as he was concerned the Super Test was going to be good for the championship.

While Blanchard and the FIM might claim that thousands of spectators flocked to watch the night-time special stage, truth is they didn't. Yes, there were several hundred spectators present – all enjoying free access – but with the Super Test laid out on a five-a-side football pitch (yes, it really was that short) just metres away from several high-rise housing blocks that's hardly surprising. If someone built a mini motocross track right outside your front door you'd want to pop along and see what was happening too.

Following a clear-as-mud briefing where the FIM official tried to explain what was expected of the riders – where they would need to ride, how

long they had to complete the test and what their penalties would be should anything go wrong – most were left more confused than before the meeting started. What concerned most riders was the fact that they were being asked, sorry, told to entertain members of the general public with no real interest in enduro yet should they fail to get themselves and their bikes back to the parc ferme in the allotted 40 minutes they weren't allowed to start the first day's competition. Kind of like telling Valentino Rossi to do a pre-race lap of honour and then preventing him from starting the main race should he encounter any problems. Crazy.

So what of the racing? Well, it was s\*\*t. The crowd loved it each and every time one of the world's best riders made himself look a complete beginner by getting stuck in a section of rocks or falling while crossing a log. None of the spectators were interested in the results, all they wanted were accidents and incidents.

So that was that, a lot of work for little more than one minute of Super Test action for each rider. Some did okay, others messed up the opening round of the '09 championship before it had truly begun. Swede Bjorne Carlsson pretty much wrote his season off when he dislocated his knee. And yet things got even better when the WEC arrived in Spain...

With the organisers having not marked out a separate Super Test the good old Extreme Test was where the Friday night circus would be held. One event into the '09 series and already it seemed that the FIM were making things up as they went along as they turned a blind eye to the fact that the organisers didn't have a specific two-lane test.

The whole idea of the Super Test was to have two riders 'compete' side-by-side. Instead of scrapping the Super Test and returning to a more traditional Saturday morning start the

Spanish event saw riders compete one at a time over a modified course.

Not only was the Spanish event opener as exciting as watching paint dry it was dangerous for both the riders and the public. With adrenalin-fuelled Enduro Junior riders having the best of the evening light they crashed, smashed and banged their way through the test. With spectator safety seemingly having not even been considered one rider careered into the crowd flattening several children in the process (sounds pretty exciting to me – SL). Thankfully, no-one was hurt. But with just one event official and no FIM officials on hand it was left to the quick thinking of a former WEC racer to try and move spectators away from the outside of a particularly dangerous corner.

You can argue that 'what ifs' mean nothing. But what if one of those children had been seriously injured or worse? Would the rider be guilty of manslaughter? Do the clubs even have public liability insurance? Several riders took to wearing their own helmet lights so bad was the illumination provided by the organisers. Several riders made mistakes in the ridiculous, walking-speed, rock sections. Some even saw their chances of victory on day one taken away from them.

Extreme Tests were introduced as the WEC's spectator specials, where easy access allowed and encouraged the public to get up close and personal with the WEC's riders. So why do we need Super Tests that do little other than make the world's best riders look stupid? And even more worryingly, how much longer will the FIM back Alain Blanchard as he poisons the WEC? Super Tests might have worked but they didn't. Like any world championship the primary goal should be to determine the world's best which the powers-that-be seem to have completely lost sight of...





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## IMPULSE BUY

I am writing as a devoted owner of a somewhat bag of trouble. For the past few years dirt biking has been a major part of my life and I have spent every day reading about it, researching it, watching it on YouTube, working on my brother's bike with him (it was him who introduced me to it), daydreaming about it and saving my magic beans.

A few months ago a fortunate turn of fate enabled me to purchase a bike of my very own. Yippee! However, in my excitement and haste I made the very silly mistake of buying a bike without testing it first from somebody a good few hundred miles away. I know this may sound completely stupid but it was from an established dealer who assured me the bike was sound as a pound which was why I was paying top dollar for it.

Arrival day came and she was the most stunning, cleanest looking '06 YZ250F you could imagine. It wasn't until it came to my first outing that the problems started working their way to the surface. The first thing I noticed was a bit of coughing and spluttering, then I realised the steering head bearing had gone. There was also a lack of power, then the throttle started sticking and the clutch wouldn't disengage (not a good combo). I managed to stop it and started to speak to my brother about it, engine still idling, when he started yelling at me 'kill the engine!' I looked down and saw my header pipe was glowing almost white hot!

Anyway, I called the dealer who tried fobbing me off saying all the things I was experiencing were completely normal. It may be my first bike but I know at least enough about them to know he was talking out of his pantaloons!

So I took her to my local motorcycle mechanic who stripped her down and found that she was in his words 'a pig in a poke'. In short, she'd been blown up and bodged back together with Sellotape and Bluetack! For instance the intake cam wheel had sheared off and had been badly welded back on! So a top-end rebuild, new cables and nearly a grand later I finally have a bike!

The moral of the story which I would like to share with everyone is never – no matter who is selling it to you and no matter how excited you are – buy a bike from somebody without going over it first with a fine-toothed comb!

**Nick**, via email

*We're all absolutely gutted for you Nick but we can see how it happened – sometimes excitement just gets the better of a guy and common sense goes out of the window. Lawless once snapped up a Russian bride over the internet and when she arrived he looked nothing like her photo! In future Sean's always going to try before he buys...*

## HITTING THE APEXI!

First of all great mag! Me and my stepdad read the print off it. I went training at Apex near Worcester the Saturday before the Hawkstone International intending to go to watch it afterwards.

Apex is a great track by the way and I'd recommend it to everyone. However, I came a cropper on the double/triple section, landing heavy on my left leg. When I took down my pants to find a heavy swelling I thought that would be normal with a crash like that as I suffer from haemophilia – a blood disease which means I don't have the clotting formula in my blood and have to inject myself.

Anyway, after an injection I walked round watching all day suspecting nothing more than a swollen knee. However, just as a precaution I went to the local hospital and they sent me for x-rays and it turns out I've fractured my tibia and torn the cruciate ligament. Not only that I missed a great day's racing at Hawkstone and I'm out for at least three months.

Finally, do you have any ideas how I can train while I'm on crutches?

**Danny**, Chester

*Sorry to hear that Danny – and we hate to rub it in but Hawkstone was really, really good this year! With crutches you're really going to be limited to upper body exercises but using light weights and doing lots of reps will help keep your cardiovascular fitness levels going ready for your return to the saddle. Although if you're potted up it will get real sweaty and start to pen and ink a bit...*

## WANNA SPANNA!

I'll kick off this email by saying you do a great job with the mag – I buy every issue without fail. I've left school and love motocross – it's been my life for the last five years and I enjoy everything about it, even cleaning my bike after a muddy weekend racing!

So I was just wondering how I would go about becoming a motocross mechanic? How do the mechanics for the top teams get to where they are now and how should I get started?

**Nath**, Crewe

*We reckon your best bet is go to the big races, hang around the pits and get your face known. Ask some established spannermen how they got their jobs. Obviously, you need to know what you're doing with the spanners as well. Can you find a small-budget team that needs a volunteer to help out? It's a tough one this as you can't go to college and get a C&G in MX mechanics. And it goes without saying that your steed must be perfectly turned out every time so you get a reputation for being a stickler for detail.*

*Good luck!*

## RAIN STOPS PLAY

Thought I'd write in to see if you guys knew of any reasons why there's no indoor motocross or supercross tracks available for practice? As we're all aware the weather almost put a stop to practising this winter (in central Scotland anyway), it just seems crazy that nobody has anything indoors – it would certainly pay as there are loads of people every weekend itching to go somewhere.

My job is a farrier (blacksmith) and every weekday I watch as owners load their horses up to go to one of many indoor events and it's so frustrating knowing that the weather is going to decide what's happening at the weekend for us. Living in the central belt there's loads of big warehouses of which many are empty, owned by big companies like Tesco and Asda. It would be really nice for a company like that to promote or help with our sport. Wishful thinking!

**Gordon**, Lanarkshire

*It sounds like a great idea Gordon and there have been a number of indoor practice facilities in the UK in the past but the trouble is it's too seasonal – they may be busy in the winter but no-one uses them in the summer months...*



## MONKEY BUSINESS!

Just a plea to get a picture in your awesome mag – I'm sure you'll agree it's a cracker! It's of our mate Simon 'Boy' Daniels and bless him, no-one tries harder – or crashes harder.

We recently trooped over to Dunkirk (where this picture is snapped), Lommel and Eesel for some pre-season training and thought it was time Boy Daniels achieved worldwide global recognition for being the crash monkey he is!

He must have binned it a dozen times in the week we spent there and this was the best we caught on film! So please, please, please – with a cherry and a noody lady on top – print this pic!

**Will**, via email

*Mega pic Will – the Boy Daniels sure has skills! Forget the cherry but send the noody lady to the usual address please (unless he's Russian)...*



## GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

WE'LL HERE'S WHERE YOU SHOULD BE SAYING IT...

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There are many ways to get yourself noticed out on the racetrack and wearing this all-new Fox Explosion racewear is definitely one of them! Definitely bright and bold this fantastic Fox kit comes in three colourways – this somewhat garish purple/yellow combo as well as equally sensual get-ups in black/red and blue/yellow. Tried and tested thoroughly by leading Fox racers including CAS Honda badass Billy MacKenzie, the design, build and fit of this clothing is outstanding as you'd expect from any Fox product.

**Price:** Pants £125 Jersey £35 Helmet £220

**Supplier:** [foxracing.com](http://foxracing.com)

**Contact:** 0191 487 6100



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### THE JAMES STEWART COLLECTION

Not due to hit selected dealers until the end of the month, this super cool James Stewart collection Answer racewear will be available in four colour ranges and sizes to fit most humans. As worn by the superfast American supercross star in this year's AMA series this whole great-fitting, awesome-looking, trick-ass collection is sure to sell faster than hot cakes so you'll have to get your groove on to a dealer near you right now if you wanna wear the sweetest duds on the racetrack this summer.

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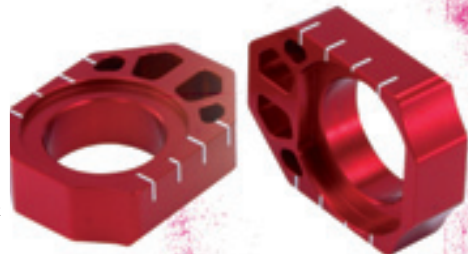
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## WHACKO TACO!

The 2009 Red Bull X-Fighters tour kicks off in Mexico City's Plaza de Toros in front of a sell-out crowd of 43,000 frenzied FMX fans. With riders from no fewer than 11 nations taking part in the X-Fighters opener it's 17-year-old debutant Levi Sherwood who takes the opening win of the five-stop series proving that Kiwis actually can fly – and perform tricks while doing it.

As well as being a great night for the antipodean rider and his supporters there's fantastic news for British FMX fans too because it's also been officially announced that the Red Bull X-Fighters will head to the UK for the first time in its nine-year history on August 22. The venue for the momentous event is still a secret so far but it's definitely somewhere in London! Stay tuned to [www.redbullxfighters.com](http://www.redbullxfighters.com) for regular updates on the UK stop of this awesome series.



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# SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME?

A FEW MONTHS ON FROM OUR EXAMINATION OF THE IMPACT OF THE CREDIT CRUNCH ON THE 2009 SEASON, WE TAKE A LOOK AT THE POSSIBLE EFFECTS OF THE WORLDWIDE RECESSION ON 2010 AND BEYOND...

Words by Adam Wheeler Photos by Magnus Andersson



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Giuseppe Luongo**

**A**fter months of doubt and worry the paddock assembled at Faenza for the first grand prix of the 2009 season and before the foul weather arrived and the heavens opened the place looked bright, colourful and in good health. Certainly there were no outward signs of the financial gloom that is affecting the planet.

For 2009 we're seeing reduced – but not drastically culled – efforts that don't reflect the gravity of the global financial situation. As we explained back in the February issue, part of the reason for this is that the Japanese sale season runs from October to April and '09 contracts with riders, partners and teams were largely committed before the full scale of the tumbling economy became clear and banks started to collapse.

But any scepticism through the chilly winter months could turn far more serious when it comes to analysing budgets, signing riders – with almost all of the top stars' contracts up for renewal in '09 – and booking a place in the GP gate again in the next six months.

"I don't think that the paddock will look very different in 2010," says Youthstream President Giuseppe Luongo. "The Japanese use grand prix to develop their bikes, the budgets are much less compared to other motorsports and for this I believe that they will still be present."

"It is good to come to Faenza and see how well everyone has turned out but I think everybody is running on a lot of enthusiasm," reckons Honda Motor Europe's Off-Road Co-Ordinator Roger Harvey. "Personally I think 2010 could be tougher. I say 'could' because nobody can predict what is going to happen but I do know that a very important part of this sport – the riders – are coming to the end of one and two-year deals and a lot of negotiating needs to happen soon."

"It is difficult to say if the paddock will change much," says KTM Off-Road Sport Director Pit Beirer. "We know that there will be a reduction and this will affect the sport. On the other hand it will not kill the sport. Our bikes are pre-production models and development on these needs to go on anyway so we will be here, no question. I don't think motocross will be affected too badly. We aren't burning money in the way other motorsports are."

A key point for the short-term future hinges on the commitment and depth of involvement from the manufacturers. Aside from KTM – which backs seven squads – the Japanese through Honda, Yamaha, Suzuki and Kawasaki have the largest presence in the paddock and



**KTM Off-Road Sport Director  
Pit Beirer and MX1 star  
Max Nagl**



© R Archer

split 20 of the 31 teams between them. Factory Teka Suzuki team owner Sylvain Geboers has already stated that he would not be surprised if some manufacturers stopped fabrication or even combine to create new motorcycles.

The Japanese economy – the second largest in the world – is in its worst state since the Second World War. Naturally there has to be a fall-out from these conditions, especially with consumers around the globe hardly rushing to buy luxuries such as motorcycles at the higher prices that are now just starting to creep in.

All four Japanese brands have a factory-connected team and give support to other set-ups. Spokesmen from all four have commented that the structure of their representation could well change for 2010. At their presentation in Faenza, Honda could not confirm the final term of their three-year plan to re-establish Honda as a works motocross force for 2010.

"Manufacturers will not leave the GPs because it is important for their products, whether it is development of the 150 or the two-strokes in the European series," continues Luongo. "Maybe manufacturers who back several teams will have to make a cut and support one or two. Our vision is that manufacturers will have one team in MX1 and one in MX2. We hope Husqvarna will come back next year and one day BMW might race so that creates a healthy and diverse field. There will be better competition and the paddock will be more balanced instead of brands having half-a-dozen teams."

Manufacturers' priorities for world championship participation hinge on two factors – promotion and technical development. They certainly gain exposure from GP racing and it is important for them that prototypes remain on the gate, meaning the FIM faces a tough sell if it wants to reshape the rulebook. Thankfully, due to its nature, motocross is able to escape the shackles of cost-cutting measures that have blighted MotoGP in recent weeks.

"A sport that is true, honest and down-to-earth like motocross has a chance. We want it to be an affordable sport and that is why we have to be careful with these technical 'goodies' like electronics, telemetry and traction control," says Wolfgang Srb, Chairman of the FIM Motocross Commission. "When we make changes we always ask 'does it make the racing any better?'. We could have a 10 million dollar bike but we don't >>>





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# ELECTRIC DREAMS!

BRIGHT SPARKS...

Next year's paddock and the machines and riders within may be lurking under the shadow of a hefty question mark but what of the long-term future of the sport? How might things look in 10 years?

Harvey has a good lead-in for this. "Think back 10 years first. I believed then 'how can motorbikes be made any better than this?' and they have been and 'how can riders do anything more than there are?' and they have evolved. We are getting there environmentally and that is where the electric bikes might come in. Will there be an 'MXE' class to go with MX1 and MX2? Who knows?"

The buzz with electric motorcycles has been charging recently. Swiss firm Quantya have had their impressive Track model on sale for more than 18 months and KTM recently declared they are working on a Zero Emissions Enduro machine (that industry insiders say could start production in 2011). The FIM witnessed Jean Michel Bayle conducting an e-bike test at the end of March and Jeremy McGrath has been playing on one for the media in the US.

With environmental issues a dark cloud above motocross, electric bikes could start a revolution not only in terms of noise (non-existent) but also technical development, riding styles, publicity and a complete change of the motocross GP experience for the fan.

"We are very open to electric bikes and it is important for the future," says Srb. "Our message to the manufacturers is 'when you are ready then so are we'. I think everyone still needs some time but when the bikes are ready the Grand Prix Commission will sit down and find something nice to bring this future technology into the open. I think it is difficult to say if this will perhaps happen in the next five years or not. Although even if a manufacturer just wants to show their product in front of a big crowd and on GP stage like this then we are prepared."

"Demo laps or an exhibition race at a Grand Prix – this can be done immediately," supports Luongo. "We are pushing for that. KTM are working hard on their project and the Japanese are more secretive but I have no doubt they are also developing something. Electric bikes in the short-term will be very good for a demonstration or support event but I think we are very far from this technology taking over completely."

"The world championship will always be about the best bike and the best riders of the moment so we are ready for a change if it happens – for us the promotion and organisation of the sport will not alter in a big way."

So how close are we to watching a set of batteries-with-wheels on a GP track? Honda have been working on an electric road bike and KTM have already broken the surface but will not reveal any more details about their Enduro prototype aside from the fact that it weighs 90 kilos, is likely to be homologated for the road like the EXC range and that research is ongoing with regards to actually charging the vehicle and waste disposal.

"This is being taken very seriously and I think there is a production plan in place," says Beirer. "The bike is getting ready for serial production even though we are not putting ourselves under any pressure to meet a firm date. It will open the door for many new possibilities even though there is no way it will totally replace the traditional engine. It will make the sport greener, it will allow us to go nearer to main cities and cut down on noise pollution. I don't know how the FIM will tackle the rules but I think we will see the bike on a GP track within five years."

"We have had the chance to test it with some of our best riders. I think it is very interesting because it is a new field of research and development. Already these bikes have incredible torque and throttle response and that's what you need to ride fast off-road."

Honda are slightly more cagey. "The initial work is for volume sales," says Harvey. "Honda are very interested in different technology but the priority is for volume sales first before an off-road project. I'm sure other Japanese companies are also looking at alternative power means for motorcycles."

But what about the prospect of KTM stealing a march on the competition? "Of course we are looking at them and how they get on but we are going our own way," adds Harvey. "KTM is an incredible company so I doubt they will fail with it. Somebody has to be the first, like somebody had to be the first out there with a 150cc and we took that option."

"I think they will have a separate series. The FIM had difficulty in equating four-strokes and two-strokes so when it comes to wattage engines it might be even trickier. One area always overtakes the other in development – that is why we don't see 250s in MX1 anymore because four-strokes were the way to go."



special feature

**Teke Suzuki**  
team principal  
Sylvain Geboers



KTM is working on an electric bike...



...and Quantya already have one on sale

need it. Other sports went in this other direction but now they are trying to cut costs everywhere.

"We have meetings with the manufacturers and we will continue with prototypes but we don't want exotic materials. We do not want the sport to be too expensive. The idea of someone affecting the results with the push of a button on a laptop is completely against what we think motocross is about – we would not accept this even if the manufacturers pushed for it."

Aside from their own financial woes (especially for the Japanese with a towering yen), the manufacturers' other gripe with GP motocross is paying to race. A scenario they are not accustomed to in other disciplines but Luongo has an explanation. "Someone like Honda says to me 'if I go to Superbike they pay me to race, I come to motocross and then I have to pay to race. Why?' The answer is very easy. In Superbike you lose money because of the amount you have to invest. In motocross I ask you for money to compete but it is cheaper and the balance sheet looks better. Make your choice. Everyone has their own story of course but we are just trying to bring the sport alive."

"Every year I make little money because I invest in the TV coverage or build a new pit lane. If I wanted to make money I would spend much less on organising the grand prix and the whole structure. That would work in the short-term but maybe not in the long-term."

"It is difficult for the teams but it is equally difficult for Youthstream because they are trying to run a business and take the show on the road," agrees Harvey. "They are trying to give the teams and the riders a much better vehicle to go out and get some sponsorship. I can appreciate both sides – I would like to see the teams have better support but from where?"

"In all honesty I would like to see things made a little bit easier for the teams. Youthstream make all the facilities available for them to get extra assistance but then the teams don't necessarily have the right infrastructure to take that step or to speculate. It's not an easy situation!"

"I'm not sure if the team would exist if Honda had withdrawn their support," says Martin Honda's Sport Manager Lorenzo Resta, co-ordinator of one of the two Honda Europe-backed squads.

"To make a world championship in this way it costs around a million >>>



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**The KTM factory are poised to weather the global financial storm**

Euro for each rider and there are teams here that spend more than double our budget. Honda helps us a lot and we are well supported and I think without this we would not be here. I also think that we would not be ready to make backward steps such as lose the truck and the hospitality and not be as professional. This is not an option."

The 2009 world championship took a hit with the cancellation of two overseas rounds, denying important worldwide exposure. But the ratio of cost-to-coverage means that GP motocross is a far better prospect for outside sponsors wanting to spend less than a MotoGP or WSB budget but still see their name on pan-global television. A motocross bike may screen less than a superbike but it still screens and even in this multi-channel digital age there are many sports that would scream for the international broadcast hours that the world championship gets.

Luongo's belief that the financial fall-out will actually benefit motocross can be validated by the arrival of brands such as Braun, Teka (formerly sponsors of football) and even a chain of Czech Casinos that fancied the look of the smaller TM team.

"There are companies like Braun that know the market and what fees sports sponsorship to a certain level can involve. Today motocross is a good compromise because it has good coverage and visibility," explains Luongo. "We believe some big names will come to motocross because they can see that they get something back. I think we will have less and less financial support from the manufacturers but more coming from outside sponsors. To have this we have to give authority to the work we do with television, media coverage and places where sponsors can bring their guests. Work on promotion will become even more important than before."

With the horizon looking cloudy in terms of what the manufacturers might be able to bring to the 2010 table, it seems there is little choice. Resta echoes Luongo's sentiment. "We are optimistic because we hope there will be some opportunities from companies coming from bigger motorsports that see us as a good investment," the Italian says. "At the same time we are not going to go crazy. Travelling with two trucks costs 30 per cent less than last year because of the gas which is strange in a crisis but then we are hit in other areas."

"Motocross compared to road racing represents good value because of the promotion," says team owner Paolo Martin. "I think if a good job is made this year then the sponsors will come. In Italy the television coverage is good. The market is also stable and I'm not sure why."

This commercial 'hope' is an example of the optimism that exists in the paddock but the realistic picture is that new sponsors would have to ally themselves to teams in the next six months to prevent any major shifts for 2010.



**Honda's Roger Harvey**

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**Sutty sucks it in and puffs it out as he gets dialled on his new factory mount**

# F A C T O R Y F A T T Y!

AT THE RIPE OLD AGE OF 33 – AND WITH HIS MANLY WAISTLINE PUSHING SOMEWHERE BEYOND THAT FIGURE – OUR DEPUTY DAWGER LIVES OUT HIS LIFELONG DREAM AND FINALLY BECOMES A FACTORY SUPPORTED RIDER...

Words by Sutty Photos by Sutty and Andrew Ferguson

**E**ver since I was a snotty-nosed toddler back in the late '70s I've had a bit of a thing for CCM race bikes. Whether it was the shiny hand-made chromed frames that first attracted me, that iconic booming four-stroke thump or just the fact that they were built in Bolton and that little bit different from the norm I do not know but there's always been something about Clews Competition Motorcycles that's given me the horn.

Always few and far between on the track, the latest breed of CCM race bikes are an even rarer breed and there are only 12 of the aluminium CMX frames – that cost in the region of £10,000 to create – currently in existence. Due to their low numbers the CMX is a bike that most people can only dream of ever riding for themselves and until recently I myself never thought the opportunity would arise (short of whacking TC around the head with a piece of 2x4 mid-moto at a Maxxis round, dragging his skinny little ass into the bushes and stealing – then squeezing into – his UFO riding kit so I could sneak in a lap or two before the feds hunted me down like a dawg).

But before things got so desperate that I popped down to my local branch of Buildbase to pick up an adequate length of timber, a pre-season team reshuffle left one saddle on the team unfilled. And before most people had finished reading the press release stating that Kristian Whatley would not be a

member of team CCM in 2009, I'd already tapped out an email to G2F's Jake Miller to see what the score was regarding getting a long-term loan of the now spare race machine.

Having decided that the answer would be a resounding no even before I'd hit the send button I was actually more than a little surprised when Jake called me back to ask more about my proposed project an hour or so later. He ummed and ahed in all the right places then said he'd get back to me later on. How much later he didn't say but I wasn't gonna hold my breath just in case.

But believe it or not after exchanging a few more phonecalls and an email or two I was driving the DBR Tranny of love – or TranDawg™ as I recently renamed it – down to the edge of Bolton to pick up a factory CMX450 of my very own, set-up for me by race team technician Ryan Thorpe and complete with my name and numbers on the graphics and everything.

Far from being in a dark and satanic mill type environment (complete with a fiery furnace and a leather-aproned guy beating the living s\*\*t out of cherry red hot lengths of metal over an anvil and all that) like I'd imagined, CCM's new headquarters sit alongside The Awning Company's base in Jubilee Works which is a relatively brand new and airy development of industrial units on the Eastside of Bolton.

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RESERVED 2



From headstock to hub the CMX450 is trick as hell!



With a small showroom and manufacturing unit downstairs the upper level is taken up by office space and a rather spectacular meeting room – adorned with classic CCM race and trials bikes – where CCM's head honchos meet and greet buyers, celebrities and factory-sponsored riders. That'll be me then.

With Gary Harthern and Austin Clews patiently waiting for me – my entrance was tardy to say the least – along with my new race bike which they'd manhandled upstairs I sat down to sign my name on the dotted line and for the first time in my life become a factory-supported rider. Sweet!

While I was there Gary and Austin also filled me in on the progress of the company and their flagship model the CMX450. Originally designed and produced to prove CCM's technical excellence with innovative concepts, the CMX was never intended to reach production although all that might change later this year if things go to plan.

While it's unlikely the current crop of £10,000 framed machines will go on general sale – Austin hopes a limited number can be made available to top national championship runners around the globe – CCM are working flat-out on making a frame from cast componentry that will lessen the overall price considerably and make the bike a goer commercially as well as on the track. It was all interesting stuff for sure and if it means full MX-spec CCMs return to showroom floors then it's a good thing. But anyway, back to my weapon...

The CMX450 is one hell of a bike to look at with its semi-factory WP suspension, CRM carbon fibre one-piece airbox and sub-frame, CRM fuel tank, factory Brembo brakes, Yamaha YZF450 engine, DEP S7 pipe, Talon wheels with

Excel A60 rims, Braking and Delta brake discs, Renthal handlebars and grips, the white – mix of KTM and Yamaha – plastics, Zeronine personalised team decals and of course the best bit of all – the bonded together six-piece chunky CCM-designed aluminium frame. But what's it like to ride?

For my first blast on my new weapon I loaded up TranDawg™ and hopped across to FatCat Motoparc for a private practice session on their awesome race track. Freshly prepped for my personal pleasure the circuit was a lot of fun to ride – as always – and a nice safe environment in which to get a good feel for the CMX450.

After spending a few minutes to set up the brake and clutch levers then raising the shifter to accommodate my size 12 Gaernes before setting the sag I was good to go.

The first thing I picked up on as soon as I rode onto the track was the awesome power delivery the Yamaha motor paired with the DEP S7 exhaust system provides. Very torquey and with plenty of poke this bike just loves to be ridden in a high gear and will pull hard from remarkably low-revs – almost from the point of pop-stalling – right through the range. The top-end isn't quite as impressive as it could be but with all that available torque and grunt isn't really needed anyway.

The other standout feature of the machine is its ability to turn. The front wheel feels incredibly planted but for what looks like a big bike on the

Sutty signs on the dotted line while CCM head honchos Austin Clews (left) and Gary Harthern offer some much needed spelling advice



stand – probably due to the enormous and possibly over-engineered headstock – the CMX450 feels very light and nimble out on the track but not so much so that it feels twitchy or unstable at high speed. Like all 450s the CMX has a tendency to push the front end on polished and flat surfaces but find anything at all to turn off and it's happy days. I personally find that the geometry and ergonomics encourages standing and the CCM just loves to be ridden Stefan Everts style.

The WP suspension initially feels quite stiff but is well balanced and progressive once you get up to speed – the harder you push the better it feels. But while I'm very happy with the way the bike is performing so far I'm less enthralled with my own standard of riding as a year spent away from the throttle has played havoc with my skills – that at the moment would definitely not pay the bills! The only way to get better again is to ride frequently and this CCM has got me pumped to do just that...



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# HAREBRAINED!

WITH A FREE WEEKEND IN THE MX SCHEDULE SUTTY TAKES IN A WOR HARE SCRAMBLE AT BADEN HALL >>

As much as I love pounding out laps on a motocross circuit I have to say that off-road racing is my preferred sport of choice with three-hour hare scrambles floating my boat more than any other. With only a couple of on-track sessions put in on the CMX450 I figured there was no better way to spend some long overdue bike time on the factory weapon than to enter a WOR Hare Scramble at Baden Hall near Stone.

Arriving fashionably late at Baden after some logistical difficulties – I got lost due to being given the wrong postcode for the venue – I had 10 minutes to blag an entry, re-number my bike, get changed, drop my fuel, spare Spy goggles, tools and spares in the pits as well as make it to the line. As it turns out I was pulling up my pants when the rest of the riders went off so rather than lose even more time by delivering my bits to the pits I decided I'd refuel back at the van and stuff – totally against the rules but I wasn't exactly in a position to win anything at this point either.

So setting off a good few minutes behind every other sucker meant I spent the first 40-odd minutes constantly battling traffic as well as the circuit that was surprisingly wet and slick after rain the previous day.

To make things even worse the nozzle on my drinks system broke the first time that I tried to use it which meant that the whole litre-and-a-half of ISO2'd fluid I'd been carrying emptied itself down my chest and over my lap – not the best feeling in the world if I'm honest. I stopped to reroute my broken bladder hose and drain my other bladder hose before getting in another two laps before stopping for fuel and a change of gloves and goggles.

The track was getting better and better at this point with plenty of lines forming as the surface dried out. My riding was also getting better and I was learning a lot about how to get the best from the CCM in the constantly changing conditions. A couple of falls and stalls slowed my progress and at around the two-hour mark I was starting to feel tired but I desperately pushed on.

My big crash of the day happened with just 10 minutes left to go. Catching a bump all wrong I got myself in a Superman position and proceeded to hold myself horizontally for a good few yards before allowing my head to drop towards the front wheel where I could hear the knobbles buzzing my helmet until I hit the ground like a sack of spuds. It hurt, I didn't feel happy, I was over it.

I still managed to finish with 11 laps under my well-filled belt and secured the win in the special persons class – special persons in the getting there late, racing with the wrong number type way. Still it was a fun day and my full thanks go to Steve Ireland and the WOR team for putting on another great race!

For a 450 four-stroke the CMX feels surprisingly light and flickabutable



With a turning circle that's tighter than a terrapin's the CCM makes changing direction a doddle





# HAIRPINS PINNED!

OUR MASSIVE MANXMANMOUNTAIN TEACHES YOU THE BASICS OF HOW TO HANDLE SANDY HAIRPIN TURNS...

Words by David Knight Photos by Sutti

**D**avid Knight is considered to be a dirt-biking legend with two world enduro championships and two AMA GNCC titles to his name and because he's such a sound bloke too the factory BMW star is kindly sharing his riding secrets with DBR readers! Each month the Manxman will run through an essential technique for everyone's off-road arsenal – this issue it's how to get around a sandy hairpin corner quickly. And when you've read and digested his latest lesson hook up to [www.dirtbikerider.com](http://www.dirtbikerider.com) for a video demo...

"Loose surfaced hairpins like this one are quite common in off-road races and although they don't look too difficult they're the kind of turn that will change every lap – that's what makes them awkward to get perfect every single time.

"In this particular sandy hairpin you can see that a small berm has formed but it doesn't really hold up that well and this can create problems

if you come in too fast because then you'll probably blow right through it. On the flipside if you come in too slowly then you'll struggle to get out fast because it's quite loose and deep in there.

"I find the best way to get through a corner like this quickly is to enter it really smoothly. If you come in too hot and have to brake hard then you're gonna tuck your front end into the sand and go over the handlebars. I approach the corner in third gear, brake early and snick down to second. As I drop into the berm I place myself just forward of the central position on the bike and then I'll accelerate right around the corner, concentrating on keeping my leg high so it doesn't get in the way or touch the ground and pick me and the bike up.

"You'll see that in this sequence I end up trailing my leg which isn't textbook style but it's sometimes unavoidable – especially for a tall rider like myself. Ideally your leg wants to be outstretched somewhere near the front axle with your toes pointing forwards rather than facing up. This way





it will skate across the ground rather than jar in the ruts and bumps.

"At around the mid-point of the bend I'll start looking right the way down the next straight where I'm headed to and as I leave the corner I'll get my weight back on the bike to get better traction as I accelerate hard but smoothly away.

"You'll notice that I always cover the clutch and in a corner like this it's sometimes handy to feather it a little to help build the revs up, especially if you're riding a smaller capacity bike than my BMW which has more than enough grunt to wheelie out of a power-sapping situation like this.

"Remember that practice makes perfect, always wear the correct safety gear and ride well within your limits. If you do all that then you're bound to have fun and that's what it's all about!"

For video footage of Knighter's awesome corner technique go to [www.dirtbikerider.co.uk](http://www.dirtbikerider.co.uk)











# 100

AFTER EIGHT-AND-A-BIT YEARS AT THE  
HELM OF THE GOOD SHIP DBR, SEAN'S  
CELEBRATING HIS 100th ISSUE...

Words by Sean Lawless



Here's a little brain-teaser for you...

Working for DBR is...

- A: 'The best job in the world'  
B: 'Three weeks f\*\*\*ing around, one week grafting'  
C: 'Poorly paid s\*\*t-shovelling'

Now correctly attribute the above quotes to...

- 1: DBR Managing Director  
2: DBR reader  
3: DBR Editor

The correct answers are 1 – B, 2 – A and 3 – A, B and C.

The three statements are, of course, closely linked. For three weeks out of four it's the best job in the world before deadline week arrives and A swiftly becomes C. And believe me, as this issue of DBR is my 100th as Editor that's a whole lot of f\*\*\*ing around and quite a bit of s\*\*t-shovelling n'all.

If I stop to think it's actually quite frightening – 100 months is a big slice of my life since I started work on the February 2001 issue the morning after Boxing Day in 2000. Without checking my back issues I can remember the cover – a Frank Hoppen shot of Tony Marshall testing the brand spankin' new Yamaha YZF250 over in California – as clearly as if it was put together yesterday.

Since then it's been a rollercoaster ride with lots of highs and the odd low as well but on the whole (think three weeks out of four multiplied by 100) it's been a blast for the last eight years and three months. So to celebrate my continued employment here is a selection of some of my own personal highlights over the last 100 issues.

And all 10 complete issues are available to view free online at [www.dirtbikerider.com](http://www.dirtbikerider.com) for a limited period so when you've finished turning pages make with the mouse...



## CHEER'S M'DEARS!

### HEART-FELT THANKS

Over the last 100 issues there have been so many people I've relied on for help, advice, motivation and – on the odd occasion – a shoulder to cry on that if I start naming names the list will go on and on and on and I'll be guaranteed to miss a few out. Worse still, a few I've missed out on purpose will think I've forgotten them accidentally and that simply won't do. So no names – I think you all know who you are anyway – just a big, fat thanks...



## OCTOBER 2001

### DOBBY'S WORLD TITLE

We'd been waiting 12 long years for a Brit to lift a world MX crown and the losing streak was finally broken by Jamie Dobb who wiped the floor with everyone to nail the world 125cc crown for Queen, country and KTM! The then 29-year-old had started the season fully up for it and he dominated all year with a string of wins – including one around Namur with not one but two busted collarbones. Skills Dobby!



## DECEMBER 2002

### 21ST BIRTHDAY ISSUE

Yeah, yeah, yeah – an easy-to-do and budget-friendly page-filler by way of a trawl through the back catalogue. Wouldn't do that again, eh? Going through the bound issues is a staple of slow Friday afternoons in the office so to be able to do it for a bona fide feature is always a bonus – and some of the stuff that turned up from DBR's early days was awesome. Well worth it just for baby-faced shots of the likes of Jack Burnicle, Warren Edwards, Carl Nunn and Tony Marshall plus Kurt Nicoll's infamous 'champagne mullet' and Rob Herring looking, er, in touch with his feminine side in Apico adverts.

## FEBRUARY 2001

### MY FIRST ISSUE...

Lovingly thrown together in less than a fortnight, my first issue as Editor included Tony's YZF test, interviews with Paul Malin, Warren Edwards, Wayne Smith and Mike LaRocco and a report from the awesome – and sadly missed – UKSX series...



## AUGUST 2002

### SEAN'S GONE TO ICELAND!

No, not the home of the £1 prawn ring, cow scrotum sausages and Scouse train wrecks – I'm talking about the island of Vikings that's a two-hour flight from Glasgow Airport. Myself and long-time DBR contributor Rob Bayman flew out to race the six-hour Transatlantic Challenge team enduro and were knocked out by the hospitality and warmth of welcome we received as well as the potential for 24-hour off-road riding. I've made some life-long Icelandic friends and my daughter Hazel was 'created' there on a separate trip to see in the New Year...







## MAY 2003

### MIXED BAG!

Big soft sh\*\*e that I am, the main reason this has dropped into my favourites list is the scan of baby Hazel at 11 weeks old in my comment. But there's tons more in here including a mental pic of Neil Prince crashing hard at Canada Heights, Jeff Goss' mum Jenny flipping the bird and the much-missed World of Embo column taking on a strangely phallic (looks a bit like a c\*\*k) shape. There's also a shot of relatively new recruit Suttly flat-out (on the deck) after a big off during a DBR test. Some things never change...

## JULY 2004

### WIGHT HEAT!

I've got grim memories of the Y2K British GP at Foxhill that was rained off. At the time I was based in Bath and working for a new – and ultimately doomed – mag called MXUK so I did a swift u-turn and headed home for an afternoon cider session in the Hat and Feather. At the time no-one realised we were going to have to wait a full four years for another grand prix so when the British GP went off at Gore Basin on the Isle of Wight it was long, long overdue. We were heavily involved in the event and produced the 100-page programme. We also came out with a patriotic masthead to celebrate the return to our shores of the world championship.



## OCTOBER 2005

### MIXED BAG #2

The DBR office is a raging inferno, beams are collapsing and a distant wailing tells me the fire brigade have left it too late. So with a wet sack over my head I charge back upstairs to find designer Marge whimpering in the bottom of the wardrobe and Suttly slumped over my desk. What do I do? I'll tell you – I ignore Marge's pitiful cries and with the last of my strength heave Suttly out of the way, grab my October 2005 copy and race downstairs to safety. Why? Well, this issue covers the second IoW GP which told us that 2004's event wasn't a one-off and that Britain was once again a motocross superpower. But the clincher is a picture of my gorgeous daughter modelling Smooth Industries Chad Reed PJs in our stuff section!



## NOVEMBER 2008

### THE 'ANGRY' ISSUE!

Another home MXdN feature steals the cover glory – fair enough, it was the biggest single MX event on the planet in 2008 – but this issue is my final choice from 100 because of 'Angry' Geoff Walker's heroics in the Red Bull Romaniacs. We all love to take the p\*\*s out of our Extreme Irishman but when it comes to dirt bikes he's the most passionate person I know and to contest the Pro class – and finish all five days of the world's hardest extreme enduro – is deserving of total respect. Okay, he got disqualified at the end but that's just the way he rolls!

## WANT TO SEE MORE?

### GET ONLINE...

Through the magic of cutting edge page-flip technology, for a limited period all 10 of Sean's favourite issues can be viewed online at [www.dirtbikerider.com](http://www.dirtbikerider.com) and what's more you won't have to pay a penny (apart from line rental, broadband subscription etc) to view 'em!



## NOVEMBER 2006

### X HITS THE SPOT!

The Motocross des Nations at Matterley Basin and Everts handing Bubba a beating! What's not to like about this issue (apart from the fact that the Yanks won)? Then there's a great action sequence of Suttly crashing out of the Maxxis British championship race at Hawkstone Park. But the best bit for me is an article I wrote covering a trip to Madrid for the Red Bull X-Fighters where I got to meet Travis Pastrana, laughed as Paul Lindsay from Irish Racer was ejected from the Plaza de Toros de Las Ventas for general hooning and then (allegedly) met David Beckham at a vodka-soaked post-gig party. And I also met a rather lovely lady from Red Bull who I spent the next couple of years courting! Good times!

## APRIL 2008

### BUM'S RUSH

The opening spread of Steve Cox's AMA SX wrap makes this one an absolute no-brainer! Obviously, there's loads of great stuff inside including an exclusive first test of the new CCM – a marque I've always felt a connection with ever since my dad researched and wrote the original Rolling Thunder – but I keep going back to pages 92 and 93!





# CASTLE CLASSICS!

FOR NEARLY 25 YEARS THE HISTORIC FARLEIGH CASTLE CIRCUIT HOSTED SOME OF THE MOST ACTION-PACKED GPs IN MOTOCROSS HISTORY...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

**R**ecent years have seen a succession of circuits host British MX GPs and the Motocross des Nations with outstanding – but short-lived – success. So what welcome news that Mallory Park will once again host our premier off-road event in 2009, thanks to the resilience and determination of promoter Gareth Hockey.

Perhaps the Leicestershire track can even become as regular a venue as Farleigh Castle did for almost 25 years, from 1966 until Dave Thorpe's unforgettable farewell in 1989.

The castle towered over a beautiful verdant valley near Farleigh Hungerford, five miles due south of Bath in Wiltshire. A natural, grassy track, it coursed through woods, across a stream, up a challenging sequence of steps onto the veranda and steeply back down through the wide, bumpy orchard. Then it burst out into a rough, cambered weave uphill onto an open field before leaping back over the horizon and plunging downhill past massed ranks of fans and parked cars.

That first Farleigh Castle 500cc grand prix of 1966 was dramatically won, on a machine of his own manufacture, by Don Rickman (Metisse). The tall, elegant Hampshireman defeated reigning world champ Jeff Smith (BSA) in the first moto and though Smith turned the tables in race two Rickman won on aggregate time by 1.8 seconds!

The following year, German Paul Friedrichs slowed up in the second race and allowed team-mate Dave Bickers through to win, ensuring a CZ one-two overall. Friedrichs, now with six GP victories under his body belt, clinched the world title ahead of an incensed Smith.

In 1968, 26-year-old Vic Eastwood claimed his first ever GP at Farleigh, skating his Husqvarna skilfully round the treacherous adverse cambers in wet and greasy conditions to beat Swedes Christer Hamnergren and Ake Jonsson.

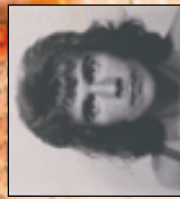
The Motocross des Nations arrived at Farleigh for the first time in 1969. It was also the first time Great Britain lost on home soil as Belgium, led by Roger De Coster (CZ), lifted the Chamberlain Trophy with the hosts third behind Sweden.

GP action returned in 1971 when, in sweltering sunshine, Jonsson's Maico won overall with his great rival De Coster (Suzuki) third. Roger D eventually won a GP at a track he loved in 1972, though the result was cloaked in controversy after he received trackside assistance from Andy Robertson's mechanic Tony Worthington. Jonsson, second overall, protested in vain and De Coster increased his championship lead over 'Flying Finn' Heikki Mikkola, who lived up to his



Farleigh Castle, Wiltshire, July 1989: Dave Thorpe wins the British 500cc grand prix, and the way to a third world championship





was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera. After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer, magazine art director, photographer and part-time art college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism. Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words. He never did get a proper job...

JACK BURNICLE is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid. At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly hooked. Next time he went he

Infamously 1985 Malherbe  
By Andrew Chapman (3)  
From Malherbe (4) and  
Malherbe (5) and  
Lawrence Spence (6)

name by clipping a fence post on the fast, rough descent and somersaulting over the bars!

Another dusty, roasting day in 1977 saw Bob Wright (CCM) lead on lap one and finish sixth in the gruelling heat. But 'Foamin' Bob' was disqualified when his mechanic John Baynham refused to let the FIM measure the CCM's engine under protest. Team-mate John Banks, second in the second moto, escaped unscathed. His mechanic Dave Nicoll allegedly fooled FIM officials into measuring the motor undersize, despite suspicions the Bolton warriors were running the 600cc engine allowed in British championships. Mr Nicoll is today the FIM's grand prix course director!

American Brad Lackey, on a works Honda, won that 1977 grand prix with 20-year-old Graham Noyce (Maico) sixth overall. And in '78 'Bad Brad' did it again, while behind him in race two Graham thrilled 25,000 fans by fending off world champion Mikkola.

'Rolls Noyce', en route to Honda's first world crown, gained sweet revenge over Lackey with a dashing double victory in 1979, though I missed the action when my 'wood-burning' (Noyce's words, not mine!) BMW blew up on its way west along the M4 from London...

Into 1980 and new 500 world champion Andre Malherbe (Honda) headed another Belgian victory in Farleigh's second MX des, only a brilliant ride by Irish upstart Dave Watson (Suzuki) preventing a Flemish clean sweep of the second race and helping Team GB to finish fourth overall.

The return of the British 500 GP in 1981 saw Swede Hakan Carlqvist (Yamaha) storm the ramparts with Noyce second and teenaged newcomer Dave Thorpe (Kawasaki) 10th. Thorpe was back 12 months later to win race one for Team Green and force a tie-breaker with Brad Lackey (Suzuki), who was contentiously

awarded the overall verdict. Farleigh favourite Carlqvist, absent injured, returned a year on to pulverise the opposition en route to his second world crown. Irishman Laurence Spence won the crowd's heart when his old air-cooled Kawasaki broke down within sight of the flag and – urged on by the crowd – the brave Ulsterman heaved the bike home before collapsing in a heap.

More theatre in 1985 when a wayward Mervyn Anstie – father of Max – crashed through the fence with Thorpe in turn one. Amazingly, 'DT' untangled his Honda and, in one of the most dynamic comebacks in history, clawed his way through the pack in four feisty laps to take the lead from team-mate Malherbe!

The effort took its toll and Thorpe overcooked it three turns from home and gave best to the suave Belgian. "I'm convinced that race won me my first world championship," says David. He'd arrived at Farleigh 18 points ahead of Andre and left with that lead intact despite Malherbe winning the GP on a tiebreak!

The only time a British 250 GP visited Farleigh Castle was in 1986. It was won – on another fine summer's day – by champion elect Jacky Vimond (Yamaha), although the Frenchman was beaten in race two by Kristian Whitley's dad Jeremy on a Cagiva who earned second place overall.

The 500s were back in 1987 and Kurt Nicoll (Kawasaki) won his first GP moto in race one ahead of Georges Jobe (Honda) who was pelted with beer cans by unruly English fans! Nicoll pleaded for fair play over the microphone before race two and Jobe duly turned the tables to snatch overall victory on yet another tiebreaker. Spence joined them on the rostrum with KTM privateer 'Swervin' Merv' Anstie fifth after leading the opening race for three laps.

Farleigh's final fling came on another red hot summer's day in 1989. We all cooled off taking plunges in the sparkling

>>

Jack Burnicle

DESCRIPTION SIGNATURE			
1st	2nd	3rd	4th
5th	6th	7th	8th
9th	10th	11th	12th
13th	14th	15th	16th
17th	18th	19th	20th
21st	22nd	23rd	24th
25th	26th	27th	28th
29th	30th	31st	32nd





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THORPE'S DAVE THORPE  
WAS THE FIRST TO  
OF THE 1972  
BRITISH GP FOR KENNEL



DAVE THORPE  
THORPE'S DAVE THORPE  
WAS THE FIRST TO  
OF THE 1972  
BRITISH GP FOR KENNEL



DAVE THORPE  
THORPE'S DAVE THORPE  
WAS THE FIRST TO  
OF THE 1972  
BRITISH GP FOR KENNEL

stream that ran through the valley and David Thorpe – who had twice before won the first moto then lost the second and the grand prix – at last got his just deserts.

A blazing continental atmosphere gripped the sweltering Wiltshire valley as a vast, sun-soaked, blatantly biased British crowd of over 30,000 poured in for a weekend of unrelenting revelry. They hadn't come to see King David lose this one – and he didn't! Trailing team-mate Eric Geboers by 10 points in the championship, Thorpe charged to victory ahead of Aussie Jeff Leisk, Jobe and Nicoll and into a three-point title lead as Geboers struggled to finish ninth.

But Thorpe fluffed his second race start, hit a fallen Jobe on lap one and found himself buried downfield. After 10 meteoric minutes he'd demoted fourth-placed Geboers with the whole quaking valley willing him on. Half-distance and DT hurled his Honda downhill past Nicoll and within a single, searing lap caught leader Leisk and fenced his way past in front of the grandstand. The whole place went bananas!

"I told myself to settle down and I'd reel them in," admitted the big Berkshire man. "Easy to make mistakes here. A nadgery track! Very slippery ground. From through the gate into the top field you have to get those adverse cambers absolutely right every time. I owe Georges one. When we crashed he got my bike up first. He didn't have to do that!"

And Eric Geboers? The smiling Belgian gnome appeared at the end of the afternoon wearing a t-shirt bearing the unsubtle inscription 'S\*\*t Happens'!

And it did – Farleigh Castle never again hosted a British GP...



# UNKNOWN SOLDIER!

DIDN'T THINK THERE WERE ANY BRITS RACING IN THE US GNCC SERIES IN '09? THINK AGAIN! JASON THOMAS IS FLYING THE FLAG FOR BLIGHTY ABOARD HIS ANDREWS CYCLES MONSTER ENERGY YAMAHA...

Words and photos by **Jonty Edmunds**

**H**e might not be the most famous British cross-country racer but Jason Thomas is determined to stamp his mark on the US GNCC series this season. Teaming up with former series winner Fred Andrews and competing in the XC2 Pro class, Britain's top performer at last year's ISDE in Greece has already shown that he has what it takes to win in the States.

Aiming to win the GNCC's Lites championship aboard his 250F Yamaha, DBR caught up with Jason right after his podium finish at the opening round of the '09 GNCC series in Florida.

**DBR: Let's start at the beginning – how did you pick up a ride on the Andrews Cycles Monster Energy Yamaha team?**

**JT:** "During '07 I stayed with Rich Lafferty – multiple national enduro champion Mike Lafferty's brother – who is good friends with Fred Andrews and it started from there. I think Rich could see how badly I wanted to race and told Fred to keep an eye out for me. Basically, Fred and I started talking and planned on working together at the start of '08."

**DBR: The obvious next step for most British riders is to race in Europe, then a world championship of some sort. Why did you decide you wanted to race in the US GNCC series?**

**JT:** "I couldn't afford to race in Europe. I also felt there was very little help or interest from teams in the UK to do world championships and with the way the exchange rate was America was affordable. I also knew there were big rewards for people who wanted to make it.

"World enduro needs a lot of money, there are too many rules and a bunch of stuff that just makes it impossible for someone who's working to compete. For GNCC you can use a stock motocross bike, you pay on the day to ride and if you do well there's support available to you. I think it's more about the rider. Anyone can just turn up and ride."

**DBR: So when and where was your first US GNCC race and how did you get on?**

**JT:** "My first GNCC race in the States was at the end of '05, a week after I got third at the Weston Beach Race. Paul Rowlands from PAR Homes mentioned that Paul Edmondson was going to ride the final GNCC in Indiana. We spoke to Paul and he said we were welcome to go with him. My dad and I borrowed the money from the bank and off we went.

"When we got here we borrowed a bike from FunMart Cycles and I rode the four-stroke Lites class. I was having a really good ride – leading the class – but then I dropped the bike in a river. A bunch of guys grabbed the bike and took the air filter out and got it running again for me. It was awesome – I finished sixth in my class and really enjoyed myself."

>>







Jason Thomas may not be well known in the UK but he's a serious XC2 class contender in the AMA GNCC series





# KNOW OLDIER!



Jason's enduro skills have transferred well to the world of GNCC racing

**DBR:** You obviously enjoyed the event and racing in the States. What was it that made you want to go back for more and compete full-time in the US?

**JT:** "A guy named Tim Taber, who ran the FunMart team, was impressed by the way I rode and told me I could do well racing in the US. He offered me a ride on his team for '06 but I was already signed to the PAR Homes Honda team. After talking with Paul Rowlands and looking at the dates I realised I was able to ride in the UK and the US. I ended up third in the US OMA championship."

**DBR:** British riders in the US GNCC series have had mixed results. Paul Edmondson and David Knight won races and championships while Ryan Voase and Gordon Crockard both headed home before completing a season. As the only Brit in the Pro class in '09 how do you get treated?

**JT:** "I have always been treated really well by the people in the US, they like people who give it their all and they understand racing at a Pro level is more than just a hobby. I have never come

across anyone here who wasn't friendly and wanted to help me."

**DBR:** Your team manager Fred Andrews is a former GNCC title winner – what's it like being a part of a top XC2 class team for the first time in your career?

**JT:** "Being part of such a professional team makes what I do possible. I mean I don't have to think about anything other than my job which is racing a bike. The team sort everything else out for me and if I don't like something it gets changed."

**DBR:** You're based at Fred's home in Ohio. How much does he help with your day-to-day preparations and how much easier is life now that you're not a privateer?

**JT:** "Fred helps me out a lot. He has been a champion and knows what it takes and he understands people have bad days as well as good days. Not being a privateer makes my life way easier than it used to be. Before I got on the Andrews Cycles Monster Energy Yamaha team I was doing everything myself. I would work on my

bike in car parks, ride my road bicycle wherever I stopped for the night and clean my gear whenever I saw a laundrette."

**DBR:** What's a regular week like – training, riding etc?

**JT:** "I have a personal trainer here in Ohio so I go to him every day and work out for an hour. Then I go riding. I do three 30-minute motos and then just play ride for an hour or so, then I go to spin class for an hour – two hours on a Wednesday – and then we normally head to the race on a Friday after I'm finished working out. I rest up Saturday and just do some stretches to stay loose."

**DBR:** Joe, the team's mechanic, used to work for Suzuki America and spannered for Greg Albertyn. How much of a mental boost does it give you knowing that he's prepping your bikes?

**JT:** "Having Joe helping me out is the biggest bonus of being on the team. We have become good friends and he knows how I like my bike. If I tell him something is wrong it's fixed, no



"It's a Wrexham gang sign, innit!"

UNKNOWN SOLDIER

questions asked. I think we have a lot of respect for each other and we want the same thing – to win. The bike is amazing – we did a lot of testing over the winter with pipes, cams and gearing as I like the bike to pull smooth off the bottom. We run a really small back sprocket and a long pipe with a high compression piston and different cams – the bike is easy to ride and has power I can use everywhere."

**DBR: The economic downturn has resulted in many teams finding it hard to get the budget together to go racing. How tough is it making a living racing the GNCC series this year?**

**JT:** "Making a living this year is hard for anybody, in any job. GNCC is no different. A lot of teams have cut back and product support is harder to get. On the other hand bonus money is still good for top three results. There are still a lot of riders at the races and contingency money is the same as it's always been."

**DBR: Last year you raced in the UK, Canada and the States. Was that because you were trying to work out where you wanted to race most?**

**JT:** "After being in America in '07 I really wanted to prove it had made me a better rider. I rode every weekend with WOR at the start of '08 as their tracks were really fun and tough at the same time. I was waiting for my visa so I could return to the US but still didn't have it in March. I wanted to be back in America so bad, I looked into Canada to see if there was money to be made and enough races to do. I emailed a shop in Alberta and a guy called Alf Gurr contacted me to say if I got over they would see what they could do. I'd saved enough money to buy my ticket and my dad drove my motorhome up from America."

"I got there and walked into the shop and Alf was like 'wow, you really meant you were coming'. There was an endurocross race that weekend and I rode a KTM 200. Alf came out to watch and must have been impressed as the next day he arranged a conference call with Andy White from KTM Canada. The following week I signed with KTM Canada."

"While all this was going on my visa application was ready. I went to the US consulate in Calgary and was given a 10-year B1/B2 visa. The next day my friend Ricky Mair flew in and we set off through the Rockies for the US border and drove straight to the Yadkinville GNCC."

**DBR: You joined the US GNCC series late in the season last year and claimed your first win straight away at round eight. How did it feel to win, were you expecting to be that competitive and what was the race like?**



**JT:** "After all the stuff I had gone through I had a point to prove. I knew I had been riding every week – in the mud in Wales, the snow in Calgary, the sand in Montreal – and I knew I had the speed to win. But I'd been there before and it hadn't worked out. It was a perfect race for me and a day that will never be repeated – I showed up on a stock bike, did my own thing and surprised everyone by winning. It was great."

**DBR: But then you placed 13th at the next event...**

**JT:** "Two weeks later I was on the best team/bike in the pits, I had so much pressure on me to do well I just cracked. I'd hooked up with Fred and I'd gone from the kid no-one knew to the kid everyone was talkin' about. I got a bad start and went from last to first in three miles. I came into a rock section next to championship leader Thad Duvall and hooked another gear. Three miles later I was upside-down having hit the ground hard. I had to pull in – I started p\*\*\*ing blood and my whole left side was bruised. I learnt a lot from that race. It was right before the GNCC summer break and the ISDE so I had a long time to think about it and get used to being on a team. After the break I was ready."

**DBR: You ended the '08 US GNCC series with a string of podium results but sadly no more wins. That must have given you a lot of confidence headed into the off-season?**

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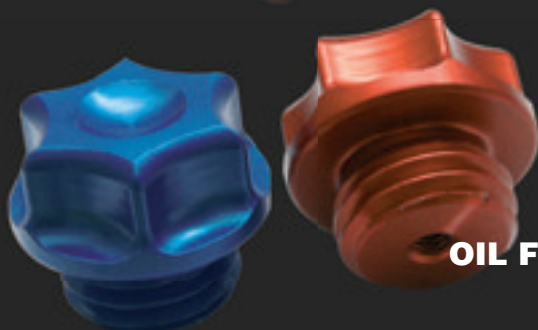
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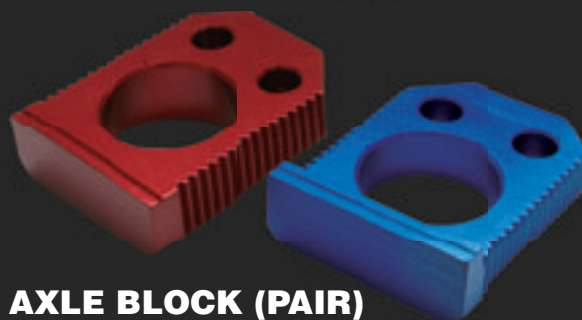
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Jason was the top Brit at last year's ISDE



'Ave it! Jason feels the full force of the mighty Sully at Matchams in '04



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**JT:** "I came close to winning a lot more races but GNCC racing doesn't always go the way you want it to. You need luck on your side. I had won my race and after that I needed to show people I could be on the box week-in, week-out no matter what the conditions.

"I had podiums in all conditions where riders like Kailub Russell blew hot and cold. I had a lot of confidence going into the off-season as Thad Duvall had left the class and of the riders in the class for '09 I was the most consistent from 08."

**DBR:** Winning the XC2 Pro Lites title must be your goal for the season. Do you believe that's achievable against the factory KTM riders?

**JT:** "Winning this championship is the only thing I want to do. Round one went really well for me so I know I'm in with a chance. Kailub was riding well and I was riding smooth behind him till a sand whoop put me down. I got up and just rode my own race and got an easy second.

"Round two was a different story. I got a bad start but pushed up to third and then coming

down a hill got sent over the bars. I got a fifth, which wasn't too bad."

**DBR:** Russell has started the 2009 championship with two wins and is now widely regarded as the title favourite – what's it going to take to stop him winning the crown?

**JT:** "Kailub has ridden awesome at the two opening rounds but I don't think anyone can do that every week, it's only a matter of time before he has a bad result. It's a long season and if fifth can be my worst result the championship won't be far away come round 12. I hope."

**DBR:** Finally, last year you raced the ISDE in Greece for the British Trophy Team – any plans to do the same again this year?

**JT:** "Being best Brit at the ISDE was another goal of mine and my dad's. I had a lot of fun and now I have one in the bag I hope to improve on my overall result. I plan on riding an ISDE again but hopefully with a little more help this year from sponsors in the UK."

WINNERS





# HOT PROSPECT!

KTM UK TEAM BOSS ROGER MAGEE'S GOT AN EYE FOR SPOTTING TEENAGE TALENT AND HIS LATEST 'FIND' IS 17-YEAR-OLD GRAEME IRWIN...

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Sully





Graeme gets on the gas at the Hawkstone International MX

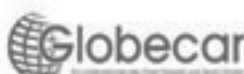




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It's every aspiring MX rider's dream to be picked up by a major team – especially one that has a reputation for spotting and nurturing teenage talent. So when Graeme Irwin was offered a place on Roger Magee's KTM UK team his decision to sign was a no-brainer...

The 17-year-old from Carrickfergus in Northern Ireland had already made a name for himself in the UK when he won the inaugural MX2 championship in 2007 but despite winning the Irish and Ulster MX2 titles last year for Moto One Suzuki he failed to make his mark on the mainland.

Sure, a 5-10 scorecard at the Desertmartin round of the full-on Maxxis championship was impressive but the 27-point haul came on home turf and accounted for more than half his total tally as he ended the year 25th in the final standings. But Roger, having just seen his most famous discovery Shaun Simpson snapped up by the full-factory Red Bull KTM team, was on the hunt for another protégé...

"If someone had told me this time last year that I'd be riding for KTM UK I wouldn't have believed it," says Graeme. "After '07 being quite a good year, last year was a bit of a disappointment to be honest. I didn't reach my goals and I just didn't ride right the whole year and had a lot of wee small problems. So when I heard Roger was interested in me I was like 'it can't be happening, it can't be true' but it's all worked out."

Having looked likely to stay with Phil McCullough's Moto-One team for '09, Graeme had to make the choice between remaining mostly Northern Ireland based or stepping it up to the next level. But despite having forged a strong relationship with Phil there was only one choice for an ambitious young racer to make.

"It was a last-minute deal and when you

get offered something like that it really is an offer you can't refuse. I'm very thankful to Roger for making me the offer and giving me the opportunity too. And also to Phil for getting me to where I was but his main goals were more Northern Ireland. I've developed a good relationship with Phil over the years so it was a hard move but I think it's definitely the right move.

"Last year wasn't such a successful one for me although I won all the domestic championships back in Northern Ireland. I only missed one or two British championship rounds and my best result was a fifth at Desertmartin – it should have been a fourth but in the last corner I made a wee slip-up. But I didn't really concentrate too much on England so this year I'm going to make up for the time that I lost."

Graeme's been riding since he was four years old and like many of his contemporaries he lives, breathes and sleeps motocross. But unlike 99 per cent of aspiring MX stars out there, he's in a position to fully indulge in his habit.

"I left school just to race the bikes. It's all I want to do. Every day of my life is just bikes, bikes, bikes – I just love it and wouldn't change it for the world. I'm a strong believer in you only ever get out what you put in so I give it 110 per cent all the time.

"It's great to be sitting in the paddock under an awning with grand prix speed riders, especially with Stephen and the experience he has – it's unbelievable. I'm actually living with his girlfriend's parents which is near him and we're training and practising together which really brings me on. There's no better man to practice



"Now where did I put my peak?"

## ROGER MAGEE

### BIT FROM THE BOSS...

"We've certainly been keeping an eye on Graham the past three years and his progress through the schoolboy ranks. I know that he's got the speed and think maybe in 2008 he just didn't have the right machinery and that if he was on the right bike he could certainly prove a point or two.

"With him only just turning 17 before Christmas he's about the same age as we got Shaun Simpson and he's probably on a par with where Shaun was at the same age and if he does as well as Shaun's done in the past few years then we'll be more than happy. What I don't like to do is bring a rider in and put him under a whole lot of pressure.

"What you have to look for whenever you're looking for new talent is someone who has something a wee bit different, who has the desire and those are the ones to try and go for. Okay, we don't always get it right but so far so good."

with in the UK to be honest."

In keeping with Roger's laidback attitude Graeme's not got any end-of-season aspirations and so far so good. Out of the four championship races this year he's never been lower than ninth and currently sits seventh in the championship table with the big #555 consistently bashing bars near the front of the pack.

"To be honest I've come into this season with no real goals at all. Last season in England I wasn't even really mid-pack but I've worked hard over winter so I'm going to take each race as it comes, use it as another learning curve and hopefully set myself up for a good year next year.

"I'll hopefully get to do a couple of GPs as well just to see how everything goes. But if I go I want to be ready – I don't want to go and be disappointed. I definitely want to try and get the wildcard one for Mallory this year and maybe a few more across the water."

Of course, Graeme knows that racing GPs is the next step on the ladder and while he may not be in line for a full season just yet he knows if he keeps progressing the opportunities will come – just as they did for the most recent graduate from the Roger Magee school of motocross. But, more importantly, he recognises it won't fall into his lap.

"Everyone wants to be a world champion and I'm no different. And I'm definitely prepared to put in the work towards that goal. That's all you can do, give your best..."



The teenager has been in great form in the British championship





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# LITTLE WONDER!

AT A TAD OVER 5FT 5INS AND NINE-AND-A-HALF STONE, FRENCH TEENAGER VALENTIN TEILLET COULD VERY WELL BE THE NEXT LITTLE BIG THING...

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

**“W**ho was that?” It’s a question that went through my brain the first time I saw Valentin Teillet flash past at Valence in February this year. It was the same head-turning effect I got the first time I saw

Christophe Pourcel ride – and I soon discovered I was not alone.

Paolo Martin had also seen something special when he attended an MX3 GP last year and was watching the European MX2 boys going round in practice but the Italian Honda team boss soon discovered he was too late on the talent-spotting trail. Jacky Martens had already seen Valentin back in 2007 and within weeks the kid from La Roche sur Yan, a village close to Nantes in western France, had been signed up for five years on orange bikes.

“It was at Brou – as soon as I saw him I knew he was the guy I needed,” grins KTM’s factory junior team boss. “His riding was pretty special and he was just there with a small van and his dad. We arranged there and then for him to come testing with us a few weeks later and when I saw him again in Bulgaria I knew I had made a good choice.

“The first day of the test we went to the sand in Lommel and after three laps he was crying. ‘I cannot ride sand,’ he said, ‘it’s the first time I ever saw sand.’ But I told him not to worry, I understood that, I wasn’t looking only at lap times, I also wanted to see how he used the bike. The next day we went to a hard track and he was just so much faster than any of the other riders who had come to test.

“And that’s how we started. He is learning sand now and he’s a good kid, down to earth, not one who thinks he is a superstar. Before he came to us he had never even used roll-offs. We have had to teach him things like this and it is so nice to work with guys like this because he is hungry to learn and so determined.”

It was Christmas 1993 when Valentin got his first bike, a QR50 Honda. Papa Teillet raced motocross for 20 years and was regional champion three times before a heavy crash forced him to stop. With only the wages from father’s job as a bike shop mechanic, the family budget was restricted but the determination and love of the sport began to bring results.

“In 2003 I was sixth in the Minivert even though I crashed and broke my foot and the next year I was French champion Minivert on a Yamaha. I had no big sponsor – it was just me and my dad – but I beat Marvin Musquin, Gautier Paulin, Loic Larrieu. It was a good year. And in 2005 I was second in the French championship 85cc on a KTM and third in the world junior. I would finish school on Friday at six in the evening and we would set off in the camper all over France. And I had to be back home Monday morning for school – sometimes my dad would drive all night.”

We’ve all heard big things of the French federation set-up to encourage youth but Valentin was never part of the programme. Did his face not fit? “The big problem for me was the step to 125. I was just too small. Back then I was only 50kg and I crashed too much. I broke so many bones. I broke my wrist two times, many things. I broke four ribs at the start of 2007 and had been out for two months before that race at Brou.

At just under 5ft 5ins tall and nine-and-a-half stone, Valentin is still small in stature for an 18-year-old but he’s obviously got qualities other than physical presence that made him stand out – even if he doesn’t recognise them himself.

>>







*'Tin Tin' fights his way through the muck in the sole MX2 moto at Faenza*





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year. I could often make places at the end of the races because I was fitter than the other riders. I think my style helps – I have a smooth style and do not waste energy.

"We have a good feeling in the team – me, Jeff, Joel, Jeremy, Shaun, Rui and Max all together in the week. It is good training because if you are not fast you see it immediately and there is a big motivation to get back on the pace of the others."

Valentin's nickname is Tin Tin after the Belgian comic book hero – hardly the most MX moniker going. "I was always called this. And, yes, I have a dog but a big dog – a labrador – not a small one like the cartoon character. I call my dog Millsaps. I like Davy's style and I try to be inspired by him. I got the scar on my face from Millsaps, my dog that is, not Davy. He wanted to play and jumped up when I wasn't ready for him."

The French teenager has definite ideas about his future. "I see my future with KTM and not just because we have a five-year contract. I don't think I could have better material and I see my future with them in the GPs. Of course I am interested in America but if I go I want a world title first. If I manage that I would like to try."

"But I am also not afraid of MX1. I know that when I am 23 I will have to move to a 450 but I still have five years before then to gain a little more weight. I don't think height is a problem, you see that Eric Geboers and Max Nagl are also not so tall."

And for sure the world is going to hear more of Valentin Teillet before that day comes around. So when a slight figure on an orange bike flashes past with an unforgettable grace and style as you watch MX2 at Mallory, don't bother turning to your programme to see who #37 is. It's Valentin Teillet, the latest star of Mattighofen's youth policy which envisages him winning the world title in 2011!

"I don't know what Jacky saw in me, I was not so fast on the Kawasaki. Until I signed for KTM it was still just me and my father, one bike and a very small budget. I knew who Jacky was of course but I didn't believe it at the moment when he said he had tests two weeks later and could I come. I asked him if he was sure, perhaps he had got me confused with somebody else."

But no, Jacky had not got Valentin mixed up with somebody else and his career has taken off from there. "I immediately had a good feeling on the KTM and was three seconds faster than on my Kawasaki. And at the end of the test Jacky asked me would I like to sign for KTM for five years."

It was like a dream come true for the kid who had never even thrown a pair of goggles away before. "We couldn't afford it. I would have a maximum of three goggles in a season before. Now ProGrip give me so many as I need."

It was a big step for the then 17-year-old to move to Belgium but his career has gone from strength to strength. "I took an apartment in Lommel to be close to the team. It was a big change for me – not just because the local tracks there are all sand but also the weather – but it was a good advance for my career."

And even with a factory contract in his pocket, Valentin did not appreciate just how good he

was. "It was a big surprise for me to win the European championship last year. When the year started my goal was to finish on the podium but in the end I won eight of the 12 rounds. I even won both motos in Slovakia with a broken hand. I had crashed in quali and the end of the bars hit the back of my hand as I hit the ground on the rocks. I had pain but I didn't know it was broken until I went to the doctor the day after."

It was the same earlier this year at Valence. "I never expected to win. For me top 10 would have been okay but I won. I have always been a pretty good starter and last year I holeshot nearly every race in the European series on the KTM. I am so light but I know how to get the power to ground."

"My other strength is my technique. I raced a lot of supercross all through my career and I have a good technique for jumping, it just comes naturally now. It is the same with the way I go into the turns too. I can go faster when I keep both feet on the rests. I was riding like this already on the 85cc. And I want to win, I am hungry now I know I can win."

Despite his slight build Valentin does not envisage physical problems in the GPs. "I did a lot of work this winter with Stefan Everts to become stronger and I feel I am ready now for the GPs. And I was already pretty strong last



With his 'discoverer' Jacky Martens



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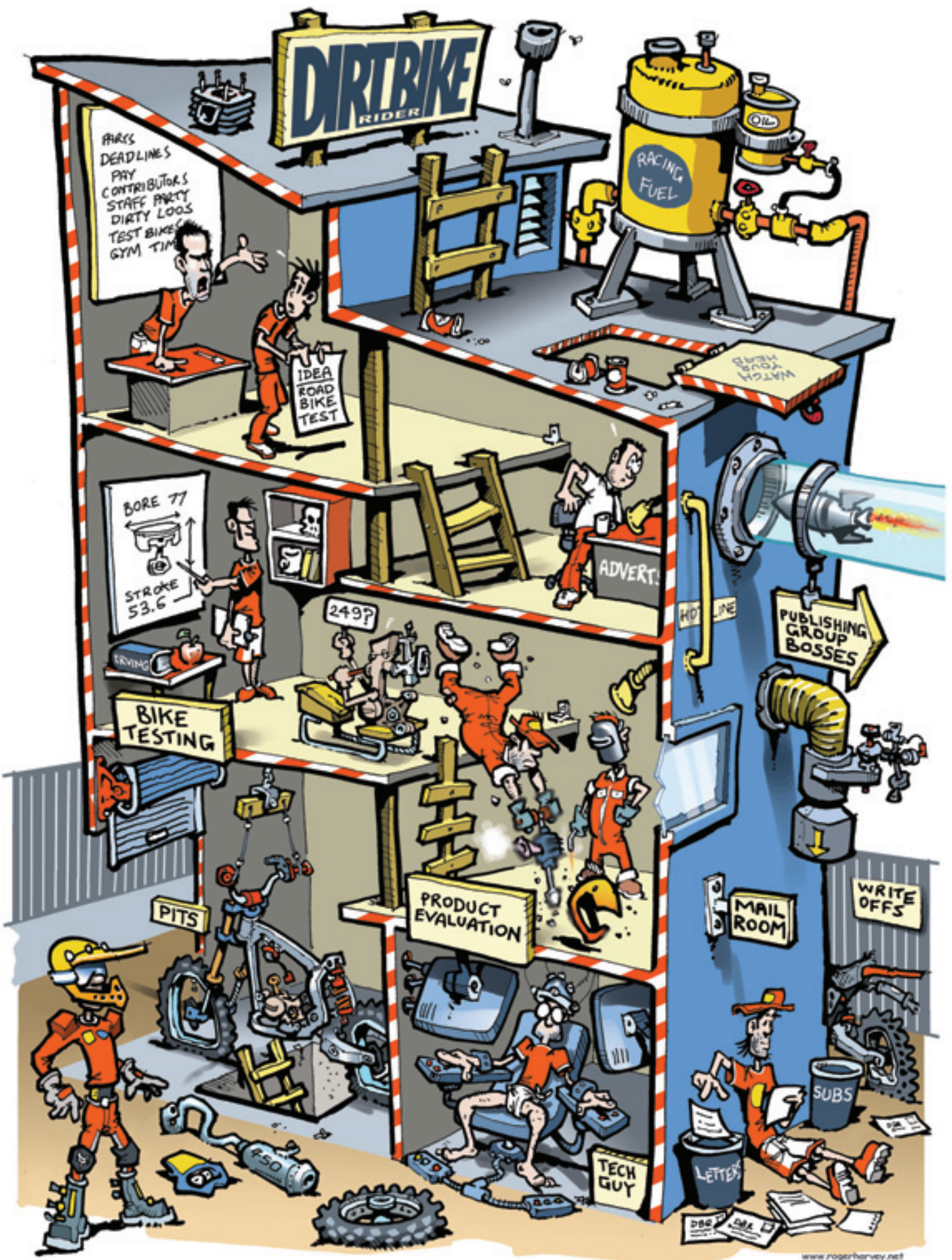
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# EX-PATRIOT GAMES!

BRIT STEVEN CLARKE IS MAKING A SPLASH STATESIDE WITH HIS CRAZY HAIR AND CRAZY SKILLS...

**W**ho is Steven Clarke? Well, as Brits you know better than most people over in the USA where he's racing currently. However, Clarke has been turning some heads lately. In his first full year as a pro he has been putting his Suzuki near the front pretty regularly. And in the pits he can be easily spotted by his Sideshow Bob haircut and British accent (all Americans know that if you have a British accent it means you're a bad guy – just look at Star Wars, for example).

**DBR:** What was your racing history like prior to landing in the USA?

**SC:** "I started racing in 1998 just doing local races and a few nationals in England and I came over to America for the first time in 2001. I've been training over here in the USA for a couple months out of the year since then. I went to the world championship in Europe in 2003 just out of luck because one of the riders got hurt and I went to represent England there. Then in 2005 I won the world championship on an 85 and I won everything in England in 2005 and a couple races on the European scene too and my plan was to come over to do Loretta Lynn's. Eventually, I got offered a ride from Suzuki over here so I came in 2007. I always wanted to be a pro over here and after I moved I did two full years of amateur racing and then moved up to the pros full-time this year."

**DBR:** What are the main differences between racing in England and Europe as an amateur and racing here?

**SC:** "It's just a completely different type of racing. The tracks are different and the races are really short over here – in the amateurs at least. Whereas in England everything's like 20-minute motos and there's a lot more natural terrain. There are less jumps and more wide-open, rough tracks."

**DBR:** How long did it take you to adjust to the style of racing over here?

**SC:** "I first came over here in 2001 and I've always trained and practised during the week so I've basically always been able to do both."

**DBR:** Is the pace different since they're shorter motos over here?

Is it more of a sprint?

**SC:** "It's different but it's not that different. In England you have to sort of pace yourself for the longer motos but then again it's only 20 minutes so you can still go wide-open the whole time if you're training for it."

**DBR:** But over here some of the kids don't train but they can still go really fast for five laps...

**SC:** "Malcolm Stewart comes to mind on that one."

**DBR:** What was it like the first time you showed up at a stadium to race supercross? What were you thinking?

**SC:** "I was excited. I wasn't that nervous because I don't really think about the other riders when I'm racing – I just try and ride my own race and do it that way. I was really excited to do that in front of all of those people and to put in my best effort."

**DBR:** What was it like the first time you realized you were on the starting line in front of 50 or 60,000 people?

**SC:** "I wasn't trying to think about the crowd and stuff, I was just trying to think about the track and I just rode my own race. The crowd didn't really bother me. You can't really hear them once your bike's running, anyway, plus you kind of get tunnel vision so I just didn't really let it bother me."

**DBR:** How have you been received by the fans in the pits? Most probably don't know you're English until they speak to you – and even then some probably figure you're from Australia...

**SC:** "I'm trying to be the Travis Pastrana, you know? Always have a smile and never say no to anybody when they come and talk to you and try not to get a bad reputation. I'm over here sort of taking away from their guys, I guess, since I'm from England so that's bad enough as it is. I'm just trying to be a nice guy." ♦





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Steve Cox is an American moto-journalist who follows the entire AMA SXMX tour. Since moving on from US weekly Cycle News he's struck out on his own to do the freelance thing and recently became one of

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**DBR:** The chicks have to dig your accent, though...  
**SC:** "Yeah they do but I've got a girlfriend right now, for almost a year, so I'm kind of settled down – I guess!"

**DBR:** How long have you actually been riding supercross?

**SC:** "Well I live at the Millsaps Training Facility and since it's opened they've always had a supercross track built by Mark Barnett and those guys. So after I was done training on the outdoor track in the amateurs – even on 80s and stuff – I used to go down there and play around and get used to the jumps and stuff."

"Eventually, I got it down to where I'd have to train on the supercross track and it helped that I got my feet wet back then. I feel like it helped me a lot because now I jump on there and I feel really comfortable and I feel like I've been riding it for years. It's good but it's definitely a lot different. It's different going out and riding it and having to train on it like 100 laps a day. It's a big difference but I feel like it helped me out."

**DBR:** How have your trips to England been since you turned pro?

**SC:** "I went back and raced one of the supercross races this year right before I was set to start for supercross here. I jumped on one of my old practice bikes that I'd sent back there to sell and I just did my suspension and a pipe and tried that out. It was good. I was riding awesome over there and I was smoking everything but I made a bunch of mistakes so I crashed in about every moto. It was good though."

"It's a lot more like arenacross is over here than actual supercross. Here it's in huge stadiums and there the crowds are nowhere near as big. I guess they haven't got the experience like they have over here. Supercross over here is one of the main sports and it's bigger than motocross because it's more publicity and more industry in it. Over there it's the opposite and they focus more on outdoors."

**DBR:** How did you get into motocross originally?

**SC:** "My dad and my uncle used to ride a long time ago and my dad hadn't ridden in like 15 years before I started riding and he always said he'd buy me a bike if I ever asked for one. So coming up to my seventh birthday my uncle told me to ask for a bike so I asked for one and I walked out on my

seventh birthday and there's a bike sittin' out there. That's pretty much how I got started and it's one of my most embarrassing moments because I cried like all day the first time I rode. I wasn't into it at all. Then I rode more and more and I've been doing it ever since."

**DBR:** So you hated it?

**SC:** "The first time I got on, yeah. I looped out. I grabbed a handful of throttle and just looped out so I was like I don't want to ride no more!"

**DBR:** Lo and behold, 10 years later, you're actually a professional.

**SC:** "Yeah, I never would've thought that back then. I was just terrible. I was really slow and then I came over here and met Colleen Millsaps and I've been training with her ever since. I just want to keep moving forward and be the best that I can be."

**DBR:** How far into your amateur career was it when you figured you wanted to do this for a living?

**SC:** "Probably after about four years of racing I figured I saw all these other guys that were doing well and making a lot of money doing it and it's a lot easier than sitting behind a desk working a nine-to-five job so since I love motocross and I

always have – apart from that first time – I figured why not make a living doing something that I love?"

**DBR:** So what are your goals now both short-term and long-term?

**SC:** "As far as this year goes I'm just trying to finish out supercross inside the top 10 and anywhere in there I'll be happy with. Going into outdoors it's the same mentality – just try and finish inside the top 10 every race. I just want to be consistent and see what we come away with. Then, going into next year with a full year under my belt, I want to try and run up front more – maybe top five, maybe podium. Who knows, maybe win if I pull my finger out and quit making stupid mistakes."

**DBR:** That's the hardest part for most people – to not only go fast but to go fast and not screw up.

**SC:** "Yeah, it just comes with experience. You've got Blake Wharton out there who just won this weekend and he didn't even qualify at the one round earlier on. And Nico Izzi has been inside the top three at every race and then didn't qualify. And Brandon Jesseman – even he didn't qualify this weekend so just making the Mains every time and trying to ride the best we can is all we can do really and try to go forward from there."











# L A S M A N STANDING!

THE LITES EAST TITLE MAY BE IN THE BAG FOR CHRISTOPHE POURCEL BUT FOR CHAD REED AND JAMES STEWART IT'S LOOKING LIKE A SHOWDOWN IN LAS VEGAS IS ON THE CARDS...

**H**eading into the 10th round of the 2009 Monster Energy/AMA SX series it's the closest title chase in the history of the sport. Rockstar/Makita Suzuki's Chad Reed (the defending champion) and San Manuel Yamaha's James Stewart (the favourite coming into the season) are tied at the top the points standings. It's as if we started the series over again at round 10.

But going into the first turn for the Daytona Main Event, Stewart makes a massive error as he washes out the front end, taking seemingly half of the field down with him. Not even rival Reed is spared – he doesn't go down but he's still caught up in the melee.

Reed's team-mate Mike Alessi gets the holeshot and Jason Lawrence – in his first 450cc race – takes a shortcut through the Tuff Blox to move into fourth. Lawrence quickly moves past privateer Heath Voss into third and then by Canidae/Motosport Kawasaki's Tommy Hahn for second.

Meanwhile, a dazed Stewart gets up and mounts Josh

Hill's Yamaha YZ450F before Hill succeeds in getting through to Stewart. "I was like 'hey, that's my bike!'" says Hill. Stewart eventually looks up to find his bike in much worse shape but he gets on board, starts it up and despite his bike being severely bent up and having no peak on his helmet he gets to work.

Lawrence – the fastest qualifier during the day – finds his way by Alessi on the third lap for the lead. At this point Reed is seventh and Stewart is 16th so Lawrence makes a break for it. By lap 10 – the lap Reed moves into second past Alessi – Lawrence is a full straightaway ahead. The prospects look grim for Reed, although they look grimmer for Stewart who has only caught up to 12th at the halfway point of the race. However, things begin to look up for Reed as Lawrence clearly begins to slow down. He's worn out.

The next six laps Reed gains a bunch of ground on Lawrence and on lap 17 of 20 Lawrence moves out of Reed's way before the finishline, giving Reed the lead. ♦



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The gate drops on the Supercross class at Daytona – seconds later James Stewart (#7) lost his front end and caused a major pile-up



With four rounds to go Stewie needs four wins to regain the crown



Jason Lawrence is sensational on his Superclass debut

Reed goes on to take the victory – his fourth at Daytona – while Lawrence holds onto second and Alessi loses third on the last lap to former amateur rival Davi Millsaps. GEICO Powersports Honda's Kevin Windham is fifth in front of Monster Energy Kawasaki's Ryan Villopoto and Stewart.

So Reed carries an 11-point lead into New Orleans. However, Stewart gets the start with Reed right on his tail. Reed tries repeatedly to put a wheel in on Stewart but Stewart doesn't budge and on lap three Stewart begins to pull away. The race is as good as over. Stewart takes the win over Reed while Yamaha's Broc Hepler is third in front of hometown boy Windham, Honda Red Bull Racing's Andrew Short, Alessi and JGR/Toyota Yamaha's Josh Grant. Reed's lead shrinks to eight points.

The St Louis track is designed by all-around maniac Travis Pastrana and just for good measure he shows up to race as well. In his heat race he crashes out of a qualifying position and in the LCQ his bike breaks while in a qualifying position. He is easily the world's most popular rider not to make the Main Event and the crowd cheer him on as he walks off the track.

In the Main Event, Grant gets the holeshot with Reed and Stewart on his tail. They both get by Grant on the

third lap and Stewart zaps Reed a lap after that. Stewart holds a steady lead for the next 10 laps before he hits a false neutral going up the face of a step-up jump and goes over the bars. Reed is quickly past while Stewart scrambles to remount his bent-up YZ450F. The damage is done. Reed wins although Stewart hangs onto second. Grant is third ahead of Short, Lawrence, Ivan Tedesco, Alessi, Millsaps and Windham.

Reed's points lead is again 11.

Alessi grabs the holeshot on the soft, rutted and very difficult Toronto track but Stewart is quickly by. Reed follows suit. From there Reed chases Stewart valiantly hoping for a mistake but it never comes. Stewart takes the win while Reed is second in front of Yamaha's Josh Hill, Grant, Tedesco, Windham and Millsaps.

Stewart cuts Reed's points lead back to eight.

The sums play out like this. With only four rounds left to run Stewie needs to win them all but if Reed finishes no worse than second (something he has been very good at doing this year) all he needs to do is win one of the final four races to clinch the title. Both riders are still in charge of their own destinies and although that could all change the chances are good that the championship will go down to the wire in Las Vegas either way...







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# LITESEAST

## KING CHRISTOPHE!

Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki's Christophe Pourcel continues his amazing run at the Daytona Supercross. After chasing Muscle Milk/MDK KTM's Martin Davalos for much of the Main Event, Pourcel closes him down in the late going to take the lead and the win while Davalos hangs on for second and Rockstar/Makita Suzuki's Nico Izzi is third.

However, Pourcel's chief championship rival – team-mate Austin Stroupe – goes down on the opening lap after a collision with Davalos and ends up dropping out of the race on the opening lap.

The last guy within legitimate striking distance of Pourcel is Nico Izzi and he takes his turn giving Pourcel a huge advantage by failing to make the Main in New Orleans. Stroupe leads the Main from start to finish while Pourcel rides smart to come from well outside the top five to finish fourth behind Canidae/Motosport Kawasaki's Branden Jesseman and GEICO Powersports Honda's Blake Wharton.

With a massive points lead in hand, Pourcel heads into St Louis confident but an extremely poor start and then early fall see him round lap one in 17th while Wharton leads the race from the get-go. Wharton spends the first half of the race fighting off Izzi before Izzi begins to fall behind. Wharton pulls away to win his first ever Main Event while Izzi loses second on the last lap to Stroupe. Matt Goerke is fourth and Pourcel recovers for a strong fifth place finish.

With two rounds left in the Lites East, Pourcel carries a 25-point lead into Toronto, meaning all he really has to do is beat his team-mate Stroupe to clinch the title one round early. He does even better than that, though, as he passes early leader Broc Tickle to take the lead and runs away with the Main Event.

Stroupe catches up to second shortly after Pourcel takes the lead but he can't make up ground on his team-mate. So Pourcel wins the race and the championship, Stroupe is second, Tickle third, Jesseman fourth and Matt Lemoine is fifth.

For Pourcel, it's the final proof that he is back. He may not be completely 100 per cent physically yet but he's close enough to be champion indoors and possibly outdoors as well.

## SERIES STANDINGS

### SUPERCROSS LITES EAST

1	Chad Reed	293 points	1	Christophe Pourcel	156 points
2	James Stewart	285	2	Austin Stroupe	128
3	Andrew Short	209	3	Nico Izzi	112
4	Josh Grant	190	4	Blake Wharton	102
5	Ivan Tedesco	179	5	Branden Jesseman	91
6	Kevin Windham	173	6	Will Hahn	83
7	Mike Alessi	170	7	Matt Goerke	82
8	Davi Millsaps	166	8	Matt Lemoine	82
9	Ryan Villopoto	165	9	Daniel Blair	75
10	Josh Hill	128	10	Steven Clarke	71



Vince Friese leads Matt Goerke



Martin Davalos powers through the whoops at Daytona

Austin Stroupe can't stop his team-mate Pourcel from lifting the Lites crown





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# HIGHLIGHTS!

OUR INDUSTRY MAN STATESIDE TAKES A LOOK AT HIS OWN PERSONAL BEST BITS OF THE AMA SX SEASON SO FAR...

Words by STEVE MATTHES Photo by STEVE COX

I hope all you blokes have been enjoying your fish and chips, your tea and crumpets and whatever the hell else you guys eat because on this side of the Atlantic there has been some Bob's yer uncle honest to goodness racing that even the Queen would like.

That's all the English references that I'm going to make in one story but as I sit and write this the series is down to four events and, basically, James Stewart has to win them all to capture his third supercross championship. This seems a tall order for any rider but you have to remember that this is James Stewart we're talking about. The most naturally gifted rider to ever set a knobby on a motocross track and, yes, that includes Thorpe and Noyce.

I've been a mechanic or a journalist for 13 years and I have to say this might be the most exciting season I've ever witnessed. The ups and downs we've seen have been incredible and even though only three riders have won races this season there have been eight different riders grabbing the third spot and a sea of change behind the top two heroes.

Let's look back on this season so far and count down the highlights...

At the opener in Anaheim we see a wild and crazy race that surpasses anyone's predictions on what could happen. Chad Reed and James Stewart swap the lead back and forth and then collide, throwing both riders on the ground. Stewie can't start his bike and while pushing it across the track gets nailed by a going-for-the-lead Kevin Windham. He lays out on the track and that's it for the heavy favourite for the championship. Reed, riding with a bent front disc, somehow makes it to third behind the man who went from fourth to first in an instant, Joe Gibbs Yamaha's Josh Grant. But it doesn't come easy for Grant who sucks up a banner into his rear wheel and with the YZ450 smoking and wheel locking up over the jumps, Grant simply pins it and grabs his first win in his second ever 450 supercross. Whew!

The next week in Phoenix, Stewart grabs the lead but cannot pull his usual disappearing act. On a track that has two long, deep whoop sections it's obvious that Reed's Suzuki is working quite a bit better than the Yamaha of the number seven. At many different points in the race Reed pulls right up on Stewie's rear fender but can't pull the trigger and make the pass. This exciting Main Event ends with James grabbing the win but everyone in attendance can see that no one told Reed about being the underdog.

We're then back at Anaheim for the second of the three races under the big A. When the first turn is cleared we see the number one of Reed down and frantically kicking his Suzuki back to life. James Stewart has no problems and is checking out on the field only something is a little different this week also. Stewart's making mistakes, the Yamaha once again not going where James wants it to go. It's enough to beat the rest of the field but Reed is coming hard through the pack. He comes all the way to second and real close to James on the last lap. He finishes up second again but the winner doesn't come out of his truck for a long time as there are many factory Yamaha team members meeting with the San Manual team. Something has to be done to make the bike work for James or it's just a matter of time before Reedy breaks through.

The Sunshine State of Florida and the speedways of Daytona are next. The roughest track on the supercross circuit is waiting for the riders on a chilly Saturday night. What happens next is something out of a pulp novel on disasters. Stewart comes charging into the first turn and grabs too much front brake, sending him to the dirt in an instant. This creates chaos in the first turn that leaves half the pack stacked up waiting like it's 9am on the 405 highway! But there is a rider who actually enjoys the crash and that's the wild child of American racing, Jason Lawrence. Taking advantage of the chaos, the 338 Yamaha rider makes a hard left and pops up right on the next straightaway in second. He grabs the lead and is

checking out after that with Reed working his way up from the back as well.

The amazing thing isn't Jason leading his second ever 450 Main Event, it's the fact that earlier in the day he recorded the fastest lap time of the day. And where's Stewart? He's knocking the tweety birds out of his head and trying to put something together despite being a good 30 seconds down from the leader. With his Yamaha bent up, a broken visor and two fingers in one glove sleeve, Stewart buckles down and finishes sixth on the night. Reed eventually uses his superior conditioning to catch Lawrence but it's an impressive second place finish. What a night!

Still on Lawrence, the kid who just doesn't seem to get it seems to get it now. At least once in a while. After struggling trying to defend his West Region number one plate in the 250 class, Lawrence moves up to the 450s when he's suspended for two races for getting into a fight in the pits! When the suspension lifts there's a race taken off to get ready and then at Indianapolis he's prepped for battle. After posting the fifth fastest time Jason falls ill and isn't able to race the night show leaving his fans and the whole industry waiting. The next week's Daytona as I just recapped then New Orleans which he skips again with an ankle injury.

St Louis follows and a strong fifth place is scored there. Toronto is next and after qualifying for the Main he pulls out with an apparent hand injury. He's on an every other race programme right now but when he does race it's impressive.

In St Louis, Travis Pastrana shows up to see what he can do after a few years away from the supercross scene. The former 125 SX champion/wunderkid is fast but unable to make the Main due to – what else – crashing. He does back-flip the finish line however.

I've just touched on some of the highlights of the season but as you have read there's no telling what else will go down this year in the supercross series. It's been one unbelievable act after another!





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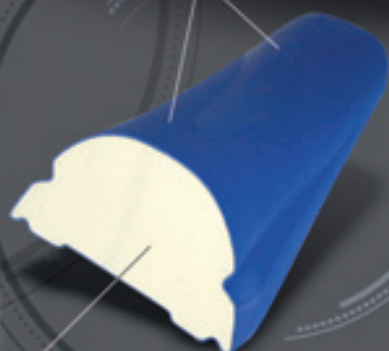
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# NERVES OF STEEL!

TO RACE OFF-ROAD WE ALL KNOW YOU NEED BALLS OF STEEL  
BUT IT ALSO HELPS TO HAVE NERVES MADE OF SIMILAR STUFF...

Words by Neil Drew

**T**his is the second article on nerves and anxiety. If you read the first one in the March issue of DBR you'll have the tools to get a good night's rest the evening before a competition. For this month we're taking a look at the signals your body and mind give you to tell you there may be a heightened level of nerves and anxiety, the typical signs and symptoms and some simple techniques to help you take control.

Part of the ability to master the perfect mindset for achieving consistent and personal best performances is the awareness of how you are feeling, thinking and acting prior to the start of competition, knowing what you need to feel like and think like in order to achieve that peak performance and having the ability to change a less productive set of emotions and thoughts into a more positive set.

Everybody is unique and everybody will have varying levels of emotions that get them the best results and performances. It is important to understand that it is perfectly all right to experience nerves before a competition so long as they are at the right level. Too high a level of

nerves will be a major hindrance because focus will be lost along with a whole host of other important ingredients in the mindset. Too low a level of nerves and you can become way too relaxed, affecting your ability to be adequately motivated.

Why are nerves important? Put very simply nerves heighten our awareness and increase our readiness and reaction times – they are an inbuilt part of our make-up that stimulates the production of various chemicals and hormones within our body chemistry. And the more aware you are of your levels of nerves then the more control you can exercise over them to get them to work for you.

In the last article you will have learned that nerves come from the unconscious part of your mind and are essentially a means of communication from the unconscious to get you to pay attention to something. Usually negatively given and received, nerves are something which we all generally think we haven't any control over. And that is where we are wrong! We do in fact have a great deal of control over them when we know what to look for and what to do to be in

charge of our emotions and thoughts.

There are three main categories with signs and symptoms of anxiety and these can be classified as behavioural, cognitively (of the mind and thought) and somatically (bodily).

**1: Behaviour.** Fidgeting, angry outbursts and irritability, constant checking (this mustn't be confused with a pre-start routine), nail biting, hands covering the face.

**2: Cognitive.** Thoughts of avoidance, negative internal dialogue (self talk), thinking about mishaps and mistakes, making excuses, continually looking for faults with the equipment, indecision, fear, self-doubt.

**3: Somatic.** Excessive urinating, loss of appetite, trembling, pacing, nausea, pounding heart, dry mouth, muscular tension, twitching and jerky movements, sleeplessness the night before the event.

This isn't an exhaustive list and some of these may seem very obvious. However, when



## DREWWHO?

COMPETITION MIND COACH

Neil Drew is a former MX and enduro racer and a qualified sports mind coach. At present he is coaching two national champions and several GP competitors and has helped many amateur and professional athletes from all over the world. He can be contacted via DBR or by email at [neil@competitionmind.co.uk](mailto:neil@competitionmind.co.uk)

you do get them you very often won't even be aware that you have or that they are even signs and symptoms of heightened nerves. The ability to monitor your feelings, actions and thoughts is the very first step to becoming aware of what you are experiencing and gaining control. It is another step to having emotional intelligence, the subject of our article back in November 2008.

Before we discuss the methods you can employ to combat nerves you need to know what your own level of nerves are that give you the best reaction times, the best levels of concentration and your peak performance to be able to build successfully from. The quickest and most simple way to do this is to think about when you last had your very best performance. When you have identified that you need to spend some time thinking about what your thoughts were about that particular event, the competition itself, your ability, your opponents' abilities (ideally you wouldn't have been thinking about them at all unless you are the type that uses opponents as a motivator), what your beliefs were and so on.

You also need to consider how you felt within yourself and break that down into as many

component parts as possible such as how confident you felt, how much energy you had, how much determination you felt and what images you were creating in your mind etc. All of these things will help you to begin to discover more about how to achieve your best and have that sought-after control. Once you have clearly identified and can recognise what levels of nerves you as an individual need to feel you then have your benchmark to work from.

By far the most common problem is having a way too high level of nerves so now we need to consider ways of reducing heightened nerves. The simplest and quickest way – and nearly always the first step – is to breathe properly. When we are nervous and anxious we take shallower, shorter breaths so you will need to take a few moments to simply concentrate on your breathing. Take some deep breaths concentrating on how you feel while doing so – this way you can monitor your levels of calmness until you find the level where breathing has normalised.

Distractions are also a great way to reduce tensions. The best one for that is music.

Listening to something which has a beat similar to that of your resting heart rate is good – somewhere around 60 beats per minute – then organising your playlist so that the number of beats increases the closer to competition you get. This is a great way to psyche yourself up.

Once you have developed an awareness of what your thoughts are and can identify any negative ones that pop into your mind you have the trigger to change your thoughts. The simplest way of dealing with a negative thought is to think the exact opposite. For example, let's say you're walking the track and you come across a section that you label as 'I hate this' – rephrase it to 'I love this' and if there was a negative image that accompanied that negative label simply remember a time or as many times as you can when you did that section or obstacle perfectly.

To put this into simple terms would be to say that a negative thought produces a negative image and a negative feeling – a positive thought produces a positive image and a positive feeling. Gain the awareness, use the tools and you can have the ability to cope with and determine your own levels of nerves and anxiety.



# AGONY AUNT!

YET MORE ANSWERS TO YOUR TECHNICAL TEASERS  
FROM OUR TIP-TOP TECHNICAL TEASE...

Words by Geoff Walker Photos by Suttty

## TRAVELTIP

Hello Geoff,

I'm quite new to the sport of motocross and I have one question about the front forks on my bike. I don't really have a good feeling for what my KX250 is doing with regard to bottoming of the suspension etc. I was at that big two-stroke race recently and I saw a few riders with zipties around the fork legs. What's all that about?

Jesse, Cambridgeshire

The zipties are on the forks as an indicator of the amount of travel being used by the rider at that particular track but zipties are not the best item for this job as they are hard and can smash the seals in a bottoming out situation.

The best items to use are o-rings and one single o-ring on one of the legs of your forks will allow you to read where your forks are reaching at every track you go to. If the ring is going all the way to the bottom and your arms are being jolted your forks are too soft and if your distance indicator ring is only halfway down the fork leg then you are running your forks too hard.

Simply click the forks harder or softer for a start with the compression clickers on the top of your KX250 units. The o-rings are pretty easy to find at a car parts dealer or for bikes of your size an exhaust o-ring from the likes of a KTM125 will do the job just fine.

1: Simply whip out the front wheel of the weapon.

2: Remove the fork guard so you can clean the fork and dust seals properly. Then loosen the non brake-side triple clamp bolts and drop the fork out.

3: Take the o-ring and slip it over the top of the fork and roll it down and onto the lower fork slide tube being careful not to over-stretch the ring. Make sure it is a snug fit, set to the middle, re-fit all parts in order and go ride!





## SICKSTROKER!

Please help me Dr Walker!

I have a KTM EXC200 and it's awesome but it's not well... After riding the bike a few days ago it ran terribly and felt as if there was no fuel getting to the engine. The bike died on me and wouldn't start after this.

The bike has a strong spark, nothing is seized and after taking the head off to inspect the top of the piston everything looks fine other than a bit of carbon layered on top of the piston. After putting the head back on and connecting the rads I put a thimbleful of fuel into the top of the head and put a new plug on to see if it would fire and I have had no luck whatsoever...

Can you help at all?

Otis, via email

"Sitting on the dock of the bay, watching the..." Sorry Otis, I drifted off there for a moment. Okay, the first place to look is the air filter and then carry on through to the carb and reed valve. If the air filter has let some crap through you will have dirt in the carb.

If the jets in the carb are blocked this will restrict the flow of fuel to the motor. Also, check the fuel tap for blockages at this stage. If the carb is perfectly clean check the reed valve for stiction. And if this is okay you may have to check the piston for a sticky ring. If the piston rings are stuck in you will lose compression and the bike will be difficult to start. Failing all of this, you may want to check the CDI black box unit as this can break down causing irregular firing.

## FANMAIL!

Geoff,

After reading your load of s\*\*t about jetting an '07 YZ125 fitted with a DEP pipe with a 490 main and #8 plug I'm writing to say it's a #9 plug and DEP recommends stock

jetting which is a 430. Mine's piped and runs a perfect tanned plug at this time of year on a 450 - all I can see with your settings is a fouled plug!

John, via email

Thank you for the very polite mail and the jetting update. After my conversation with Craig Elwell from DEP I assumed the info would be correct. I am very glad your bike is running sweet and may you have many wonderful hours upon it. Keep working on the people skills.

Hello Geoff,

Sorry, you've got me all wrong. I actually look forward every month to reading DBR and your stuff the most - for me you are always normally spot on. And how many Geordies do you know with people skills ha ha ha?

John, via email

## THIEFPROOF

Dear Geoff,

I'd like to know if you or the team at the mag would have any advice on security for my new bike. As you know these things cost a lot of hard earned money and I am hearing more and more stories of stolen bikes! Thanks.

Andrew, Essex

There is one simple thing you can do to help combat the thieves and maybe slow them down. The thieves of today come prepared for most things but I found out through a friend of mine who was unfortunate enough to get his garage broken into that the thieving toerags ended up having to leave his bike and leg it as he had removed the wheels and chained the bike down to the stand. This is a great idea as not many thieves bring spare wheels along and a bike with no wheels is hard to rip round the local wasteground!





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# TEXVEX!

Hi Geoff,

I have a 2003 RM125 and I put a V-Force 3 reed valve in it but now I can't seem to get the jetting right. I understand how the carb works and I've tried over five settings but I just can't find the right one.

The bike starts up first kick every time but when I get the throttle half opened it just bogs down and dies and I have to take the plug out and clean it to start it again. My plug is wet and a light black colour every time I pull it out. I'm a novice rider and race the B class in Texas. If you have any suggestions or an idea on what could be wrong please advise me.

Chris, Texas

Sorry for the late reply. I know it may sound silly but have you slipped the stock reed valve back in and reset the jetting to stock? I often find that when you have made a change and it is not working too well it's best to reset everything back to original, make sure all is well and then start again.

The V-Force is made to increase power throughout the range and I have found good gains in the mid-range on 125 bikes with only a small change to the carb. In the past I have only had to open the air screw half-a-turn to gain a good smooth rev through the entire range.

You should start with a new plug if you have bogged down. The plug should be a light brown colour and should be dry. If it is black and wet then it is telling you it is rich. Start with stock jetting again and if it is bogging down with your new plug fitted and stock jetting then lean the bike off one clip position on the needle.

Hi Geoff,

Thank you for the advice. I've put in the stock reed valve and reset the carb back to stock and it does the same thing. When the throttle gets half-opened it dies and fouls the plug. The past couple days it's been harder to start but it seems to run fine, then when I open the throttle at least halfway it just bogs down and dies. I have no clue what could be wrong...

Chris, Texas

I think your next step could be to try to borrow a CDI unit (black box) and maybe a stator from a buddy or local dealer. The spark may be breaking down and allowing the plug to foul...

## DRYRING!

Hello Geoff,

I have bought a totally standard 150cc KTM and it had done about 10 hours before it broke down on me. Then I took the cylinder off to find a scored barrel and a damaged piston and rings. The oil mixture has been 40:1 as required.

Do you have any idea why this has happened? I've heard that a piston with one ring instead of two will prevent this from happening again? Any suggestions?

Alun, via email

The 2008 150cc KTM can come through the system with slightly lean jetting which could be the cause of your unfortunate breakdown. The guys at KTM HQ suggest running with a number 220 main jet and a 0.75mm base gasket if your bike is the '08 model. This will feed the motor with the correct amount of lubing go-go juice to hopefully keep you ripping!



## WIN!WIN!WIN!

ISO2 SWAG UP FOR GRABS >>

Got a prep problem? Is your stroker sickly? Your four-banger bust? Or are you simply a short-arse struggling to secure your steed on its stand? Well help is at hand in the form of our tip-top tech and his top tech tips! Email Geoff with your technical teasers at [geoffwalkerdb@aoi.com](mailto:geoffwalkerdb@aoi.com) Each month Geoff will answer a selection of readers' letters and each month our favourite will win an awesome ISO2 Nutrition products package – worth over £60 – plus a drinks bottle and drinks mixer. Check out the full range of ISO2 Nutrition products at [www.iso2nutrition.co.uk](http://www.iso2nutrition.co.uk)



Wakker puts the Sunline Handguards to the test

## DBRTESTED!

SUNLINE BOBBY DAZZLER HANDGUARDS >>

These Rolls Royce of roostguards have been abused by team DBR for around a year now and have done pretty well! Two complete sets have been run and after around 80 hours of torture one complete set still remains intact.

The guards work with a rotating pivot system which rolls a bearing through 360 degrees making for a pretty difficult to destroy set of roostguards. The guards are mounted to the bars and the mounting points run with a teflon bush which again helps keep them intact. The Tough One claimed a guard within a couple of laps due to a sliding backwards incident but generally they have taken a lot of punishment and just flicked themselves to safety...

8 out of 10

EASTON BOBBY DAZZLER BARS >>

Big, bold, oversize and strong. These puppies have done a lot of hours now and completed the '08 Romaniacs with a mad Aussie holding onto them! Crash, crash, crash is what they have had chucked at them and there is no sign of fatigue.

The bar offers a comfy ride and although the PR says they are flexy they do take a little bit of time to get used to. They have a unique feel and I personally like the strength they provide. And they look mad! The oversize clamps and fitting kit are superb quality as you would expect from Easton as they are a bit of a 'daddy' when it comes to world of braceless bars and the advanced tubing required for their manufacture.

8 out of 10

BLACKROCK BOBBY DAZZLER TYRES >>

These Blackrock beauties from the Fro Systems empire are here to save the day with a quality tyre at credit-crunching prices. The tyres have been on a few of the recent test bikes coming out of the DBR technical HQ down south and they are holding up very well.

The front tyre sticks like s\*\*\*t to a blanket on all but the very hardest of surfaces and the rear tracks its way around on everything chucked in its path. Sizes are for adult bikes only at the moment with 18in tyres en route for the cross country fraternity and schoolie tyres to follow at the beginning of May. The sidewalls on the tyres feel a little less sturdy than some other brands out there but when fitted they feel fine.

They have been run with mousse and tubes fitted and have been completely fine although the front tyre is just a fraction too wide for some mousses for hard MX racing, yet spot on for a forgiving three-hour racing set up. Fitting is easy with the Blackrocks and to be honest they look pretty cool. The pattern is a bit French and the compound feels a bit Japanese so all seems to be well with the world of well-priced rubber coming out of the Midlands Distro Centre.

7 out of 10



# MID-LIFE CRISIS!

HIS HAIR'S RECEDING AND HIS PLUMS ARE PLUMMETING AS HE SPIRALS TOWARDS THE BIG FOUR-OH – CAN ANYTHING HELP LIFT LAWLESS OUT OF HIS MID-LIFE CRISIS?

Words by Sean Lawless Photos by Suttty

Getting old is a terrible thing. Mentally I'm still hovering around the level of an excitable 15-year-old with two litres of undiluted tropical fruit Quosh and a quarter of Space Dust inside him but physically, well, that's a whole heap more depressing.

I hit the big four-oh later this year and the hair that used to grow thickly on top of my head is now coming out of my nose, my temples have taken on a 'frosted' appearance and gravity is wreaking havoc on my hairy boys (which mercifully, so far, remain 'unfrosted'). Add to that a social life that consists of vast amounts of Guinness with equally decrepit-looking mates and you've got all the necessary ingredients for a big, fat mid-life crisis! So what's a man to do?

Simple – get a bike!

Obviously, the traditional route to go down is to get something fast, red and preferably topless but I've also got hefty maintenance payments to make each month plus the horror of negative equity to contend with so it was time for Plan B which basically consisted of sending increasingly smarmy emails to Karl Radley at Yamaha. And my campaign of arse-kissing paid off with the result that there's now a WR250F in the DBR storeroom and I'm lining up a campaign of extreme green laning.

To be honest my MLC has been brewing for a fair bit so I've been trying to stay in shape with lots of cycling and, more recently, time spent in the gym – all of which seems to have partially paid off with a level of fitness that's not too bad for a beer-swilling smoker who's partial to the odd chicken vindaloo. However, bike fitness is a unique and beautiful thing so I'm pretty pleased I've got the quarter-litre thumper rather than an arm-stretching four-fiddy that could quite likely beat any confidence and enthusiasm out of me with a single dram of whisky throttle. As it is the stocker is more than enough for me but once I've built up a bit of bike fitness and shaken off the cobwebs I'll be looking at ways to give a little more punch to its performance.

After picking up the bike from Yamaha HQ I pointed DBR's trusty Tranny (aka TranDawg™) west up the M4 to Marshfield where Tech Ed Geoff Walker was waiting for me. As the WRF was brand-spanking new it needed to be treated gently so after setting the rear sag Geoff told me to warm it up slowly, ride for 20 minutes, then leave it to cool down again with the process repeated until the sun set on MJ's manor. Breaking the bike in like this also helped break me in as well and I must have ridden for three hours with the only ill-effects the next day a pounding head after a marathon evening sesh in the Lord Nelson with Walker, Big Kev and a cast of Marshfield nippers who between them were causing a Wiltshire-wide hair gel and Lynx shortage.

The sweet power-delivery of the WRF obviously helped to keep arm-pump at bay – plus a hefty dose of awesome ISO2 Complete Energy – and the only time I came close to respiring through my ringer was when Geoff joined me for some off-piste enduro riding down in the valley. Apart from that I spent most of my time turning laps all on my own on the freshly-graded Marshfield track which was a luxury that few enjoy and one that I really appreciated...

So the immediate plan is to put in some more hours in on the bike, look at a few aftermarket bits and pieces and get myself in some sort of shape for a local hare and hounds race in early May. Stay tuned...



"Hey man, he  
must race..."



## THANKS TO FOLK!

### THE BUM-LICK BIT >>>

No magazine machine article is complete without a 'thanks' panel and this one is no exception. First on the list is Yamaha UK ([yamaha-motor.co.uk](http://yamaha-motor.co.uk)) in general and Karl Radley in particular for stepping up with the WR250F. Of course, power is nowt without control and Mark and Paula at ISO2 Nutrition ([iso2nutrition.co.uk](http://iso2nutrition.co.uk)) have provided me with a mega range of energy products to keep me fuelled. Wayne Dobson at Fox ([foxeuropa.com](http://foxeuropa.com)) has laid on some riding kit which Jason at Evoke ([evoke-concepts.com](http://evoke-concepts.com)) has perfectly printed up for me with Albert at Madison ([ultimatepursuits.co.uk](http://ultimatepursuits.co.uk)) laying on a huge OGIO 9800 kit bag to keep it all in plus an OGIO Erzberg hydration pack to make sure I stay lubed. Everything's topped off by a beautiful Shoei VXF-W ([feridax.com](http://feridax.com)). Last but no means least thanks to the twin-pronged Oirishness of Phil Coulter at Spy ([spyoptic.com](http://spyoptic.com)) for some goggles and Geoff Walker at SR75 ([guinness.com](http://guinness.com)) for tech tips, moral support and grading Marshfield especially for me!



# POETRY IN MOTION!

IT'S TIME TO START REBUILDING THE SHED OF DREAD IN THE CELLAR THAT'S STELLAR...

Words and photo by **Sutty**

I've tried and tried and tried but I can't find an excuse to put it off any longer and there's nowt else for it – I have to rebuild the Shed of Dread. It's been sitting there in my kitchen half-built for ages now while I've lolly-gagged about doing this, finding that and getting excited about the other. But now there's nothing left to do but crack right on and rebuild the beast.

I've realised of late that not having a garage space of my own sucks ass so I've made myself busy and created a new place in my house that's just the thing for tinkering with bikes and stuff. In the spirit of this project I've named it the Cellar that's Stellar and it's the basement room that you might remember from that Tiffany-getting-half-naked-with-a-KTM poster that I shot down there a few years back.

Somewhat revamped since then, the CtS is not so dark and dingy as it once was which is bad news for the creepy crawlies and spiders but great news for bike rebuilders. And with my badself becoming a more regular Dweller of the Cellar that's Stellar it's good news for the missus too because she's got her kitchen back which means more homemade pie for me. Mmmm pie!

In between scoffing mouthfuls of pie, becoming a factory CCM rider and doing some assorted DIY I've been lovingly putting the pieces back together on my old CR250 – engine back in the frame, reed block in the cylinder, carb on reed block etc etc. Progress is slow but that's okay because I want everything to be just so – I'd hate for the motor to vibrate from the frame because I hadn't done a sound job of removing the paint on the mating surfaces for example.

Completely rebuilding your bike from scratch allows you to modify things to your liking as you go. Although it's nice to try and keep things quite original, one item that will be brought kicking and screaming into the modern ages will be the handlebars but that's only because the bend originally found on the SoD was a bit of a shocker.

Back in 1996 although there were plenty of different bend bars to choose from oversize handlebars were fairly rare with only Answer making inch-and-one-eighth diameter jobbies that they named Pro Tapers. And probably because oversize bars were something of a rarity in those days aftermarket triple clamps were even more thin on the ground.

I decided long ago that I just had to have my favourite bend Twinwalls on the SoD but I was struggling to find a suitable upper clamp to accommodate them. As I mulled over the problem in my noggin I also remembered that the bars on the SoD felt hellishly low when I'd ridden the blessed bike at FatCat Motoparc during the tail end of '08 and that was something that needed addressing. Desperately wanting to stick with a Windham bend the only way around the problem of low bars was surely to fit higher triple clamps to gain some much needed elevation – or was it?

Thinking back to my days as a shop-supported Husqvarna rider in the early 2Ks I remembered that aftermarket triple clamps for Huskys were equally as rare as they were five years previous for Honda CR250s. With a batch of various bend Pro Tapers burning a hole in my spares box, back then I had two options if I wanted to ditch the stock bars and use them – obtain a very expensive upper clamp from Fast by Ferracci in the States or use the poxy looking adapter kit I'd been given by my then sponsors.

Being a tightwad I opted for the adapter kit but hated the look of the cross-braceless bars – that was something I only really embraced in my FMX days – and therefore switched back to traditional bars with a cross-brace and forgot all about the Pro Tapers and the clamp adapters...until now.

What this basically means – and thanks for enduring this long and meandering Marge-esque type tale – is that I have a pair of nearly new adapters still sitting in my Snap On tool chest that will allow me to use my original clamps and Windham bend Twinwalls as well as gain an extra half-inch or so in handlebar height on the SoD. Sweet!

I'm thinking that this will help the bike feel a little more modern in its ergonomics and that makes me feel much better about getting the bike done and pounding out some laps on the rehashed beast.







*Despite a promising pre-season programme, Knighter and his BMW are off the pace*





# KNIGHTMARE!

KTM'S DYNAMIC DUO JOHNNY AUBERT AND IVAN CERVANTES COME THROUGH THE OPENING ROUNDS OF THE '09 WEC SERIES WITH PLENTY TO SMILE ABOUT BUT FOR KNIGHTER THINGS CERTAINLY DON'T GO TO PLAN

Words and photos by Jonty Edmunds

**W**ith world title #3 his clear goal for the season, the opening two rounds of the World Enduro Championship prove to be anything but successful for David Knight. Returning to the WEC as part of the BMW factory team, come the end of the second round of the series Knight finds himself down in eighth position in the Enduro 3 standings which certainly isn't where he was hoping to be.

"Winning the world title is all but impossible now," admits the Manxman. "It's been a disaster. Things were going well before the first round of the series but everyone in the team struggled in Portugal and Spain. I just hope we can get to the bottom of why we're struggling to get the bike to do what we want so we can improve things at the next race in Italy."

With BMW expected to take the Enduro 2 and Enduro 3 championship fights to current title holders KTM this season, the opening rounds of the '09 championship end with everyone in the BMW team scratching their heads as to why their bikes aren't performing. Right from the start of the GP of Portugal it's clear all's not well and with little time to change anything ahead of the second round of the series the GP of Spain brings little in the way of improved results. Both Knight and seven-time world champion Juha Salminen fail to finish on the podium.

But while BMW are forced to rethink the set-up of their machines KTM, Honda and Husaberg all enjoy a positive start to the new championship. Johnny Aubert, the defending Enduro 2 world champion, not only stamps his authority on the class at the first round in Portugal but completes the GP of Spain having done nothing other than win, win, win and win so far.

With the Frenchman both fast and consistent in Portugal, in Spain he claims a deserved class win on day one before thrashing his rivals on day two and winning by two minutes. "It's a perfect start to the championship," explains Aubert. "There were a lot of people asking if I could be as fast this season on the KTM as I was last year on the Yamaha and I think I have shown that I am faster. I don't expect every race to go as well as this but it's great to make such a good start."

Behind him in the E2 standings are Spaniard

Cristobal Guerrero and Frenchman Rodrig Thain tied on 73 points. With Guerrero spending little time on a bike before the opening race in Portugal due to being with his critically ill father who crashed during this year's Dakar in South America, his speed and results are certainly impressive.

Joining Aubert in claiming victory on each of the opening four days of the '09 WEC is Spaniard Ivan Cervantes. Hoping to put a disappointing '08 behind him, having claimed the Indoor Enduro World Cup the KTM rider is full of confidence going into Portugal and emerges with two wins. With his home round of the series next Ivan doesn't disappoint and despite the weather taking a turn for the worse he repeats his GP of Portugal performance and claims two further day wins.

"Although I switched to a four-stroke after racing a two-stroke indoors I have worked hard to be ready for the first race. A good pre-season is the one thing I didn't have last year and that affected my results. This year I'm ready."

Behind Cervantes it's a trio of two-stroke riders in the E3 championship standings as Frenchmen Seb Guillaume and Christophe Nambotin are tied on 80 points while defending class champion Samuli Aro is just two points behind.

The only class not to see the same rider win both days in Portugal and Spain is the Enduro 1 category. In Portugal defending class champion Mika Ahola claims two convincing victories but in Spain he fails to do the double and only manages to top the first day's competition. With three riders – Ahola, Frenchman Antoine Meo and Italian Simone Albergoni – all in with a chance of winning the first day in Spain, it's Ahola who emerges as the winner to make it three in a row for the long-haired Finn. But on day two mud specialist Albergoni steps up his pace to claim his first win of the season, bringing yet more smiles to the faces of those within the KTM camp.

The opening rounds of the series deliver mixed results for the British competitors as all experience troubles on at least one of the days. Irishman Phillip McLaughlin sits eighth in the Enduro Junior standings after three good days and one DNF, Si Wakely enjoys two points-scoring results but also two DNFs and Tom Sagar is another who fails to finish two days and sits 13th in E3.



After two rounds Oriol Mena leads the EJ class



A pair of DNFs keep Si Wakely down the E2 table

## SERIES STANDINGS

### ENDURO 1 >>

1	Mika Ahola	Honda	97 points
2	Simone Albergoni	KTM	89
3	Antoine Meo	Husqvarna	78
4	Thomas Oldrati	KTM	70
5	Eero Remes	KTM	61
6	Fabien Planet	KTM	58
7	Julien Gauthier	Honda	54
8	Xavi Galindo	KTM	52
9	Marc Bourgeois	Husqvarna	45
10	Felipe Zanol	Yamaha	42
16	Greg Evans	KTM	22

### ENDURO 2 >>

1	Johnny Aubert	KTM	100 points
2	Cristobal Guerrero	Yamaha	73
3	Rodrig Thain	TM	73
4	Alessandro Belometti	KTM	71
5	Joakim Ljunggren	Husaberg	70
6	Bartosz Oblucki	Husqvarna	66
7	Juha Salminen	BMW	59
8	Simo Kirssi	BMW	51
9	Fabrizio Dini	Beta	38
10	Nicolas Deparros	Gas Gas	33
16	Si Wakely	Husqvarna	15

### ENDURO 3 >>

1	Ivan Cervantes	KTM	100 points
2	Sebastien Guillaume	Husqvarna	80
3	Christophe Nambotin	Gas Gas	80
4	Samuli Aro	KTM	78
5	Marcus Kehr	KTM	60
6	Fabio Mossini	Honda	56
7	Marko Tarkkala	BMW	51
8	David Knight	BMW	45
9	Rudy Cotton	Beta	39
10	Alessandro Botturi	KTM	32
13	Tom Sagar	Husaberg	22

### ENDURO JUNIOR >>

1	Oriol Mena	Husaberg	100 points
2	Jeremy Joly	Honda	80
3	Lorenzo Santolino	KTM	62
4	Benoit Fortunato	Yamaha	56
5	Sebastien Bozzo	Husqvarna	49
8	Phillip McLaughlin	TM	39
23	Ashley Wood	Gas Gas	13
26	Gavin Houson	Husqvarna	5



Johnny Aubert doubles up in the E2 division



After a tough opening round Swordy soars to a double win at Langrish



## SERIES STANDINGS

### MX1 >>

1	Brad Anderson	PAR Homes Honda	81 points
2	Carl Nunn	MVR-D Suzuki	70
3	James Noble	MVR-D Suzuki	64
4	Tom Church	CCM Racing	62
5	Billy MacKenzie	CAS Honda	58
6	Cedric Melotte	CAS Honda	51
8	Gareth Swanepoel	KRT Kawasaki	44
9	Scott Columb	Relentless Suzuki	43
10	Jordan Rose	STR Honda	39

### MX2 >>

1	Shaun Simpson	Red Bull KTM	90 points
2	Stephen Sword	KTM UK	88
3	Neville Bradshaw	DB Racing Honda	72
4	Pascal Leuret	MAR Honda	69
5	Matiss Karro	MVR-D Suzuki	64
6	Jake Nicholls	KTM UK	57
7	Graeme Irwin	KTM UK	52
8	Wayne Smith	Samsung Yamaha	52
9	Scott Elderfield	PAR Homes Honda	44
10	Martin Barr	Relentless Suzuki	41



Hairbury crimpers-sponsored Elliot Banks-Browne doesn't make Langrish after a practice smash



# WFO!

TWO ROUNDS DOWN, SIX TO GO AND THERE'S ALL TO PLAY FOR AS THE MAXXIS BRITISH MX CHAMPIONSHIP KICKS OFF AT CANADA HEIGHTS AND LANGRISH...

Words by **Sean Lawless** Photos by **Sutty**

**W**e're two rounds in with a bunch to go and this year's Maxxis British championship is shaping up to be a reet Bobby Dazzler – especially in MX2 where a pair of KTM-mounted Scots are slugging it out at the front. No prizes for guessing that the two haggis and neeps munchers concerned are reigning champion Shaun Simpson and three-time champ Stephen Sword but up in MX1 things are far less predictable.

The series kicks off at Canada Heights in early March and resumes a fortnight later at Langrish and the fortunes of Simpson and Swordy are as contrasting as the weather conditions...

At Canada Heights a bright start to the day turns into Arctic winds, driving sleet and large portions of brass monkeys all round. A country mile – 2.676 seconds to be precise – clear in qualifying, Simpson then translates two great starts into two dominant wins as the track cuts up rougher than a badger's bumhole. Swordy gets stuck behind MVR-D Suzuki's Matiss Karro for far too long in the opener and by the time he gets past he's never going to overhaul his KTM UK team-mate Jake Nicholls for second. Second time out and it's DB Racing's Neville Bradshaw who holeshots before Simpson goes through as Swordy gets caught up in an opening lap pile-up.

At the flag it's win #2 for the factory Red Bull KTM rider with Bradshaw grabbing second for second on the day and Swordy mounting the third step of the podium after a mega damage limitation exercise nets him fourth second time out behind Karro. Nicholls is in line for a place on the podium right up until the point when two back-markers use him to cushion their falls...

Fast forward to Langrish and the sun's beaming down on the awesome old-school circuit on the side of a Hampshire hill. And it's shining down on Swordy as well. The seasoned Scot tops quali, almost crashes on the sighting lap (yep, Stevie, we saw you) and gets a good gate in the opening race – although it's Simpson who leads on lap one. This time quickly dispatching Karro, Swordy moves into second and it's as though the top two are joined by a bit of elastic with Simpson extending his lead, only to get twanged back in again.

This continues until the final lap when Simpson makes a mistake on an uphill step-up and Swordy's able to dive up the inside. Simpson tries to retaliate around the outside, loses his front wheel and briefly goes down. He recovers for a safe second with Karro continuing his great run of form for third.

Race two and Simpson hits the front early on but this time out his lead over second-placed Sword is bigger – until he loses his chain and a shedload of places as he struggles to get it back on. Swordy makes no mistakes for his second win of the day as MAR Honda's Pascal Leuret brings it home in second ahead of The Reverend Jake Nicholls. Simpson goes down after scything his way through the pack but re-recovers to cross the line fourth to keep his championship lead.

Up in MX1 it's WFO with UTAG Yamaha's

American import Zach Osborne qualifying fastest at Canada Heights but leaving pointless after a big crash in the opener while running near the front is backed up with a mechanical DNF in race two. Defending champ Billy MacKenzie's looking off-colour as evidenced by his 4-5 scorecard – something hardly helped by getting shunted off in the first turn of race two and used for traction before fighting his way through from the back.

The big winner – in fact the actual overall winner – at round one is PAR Homes Honda's Brad Anderson who

*With two rounds down it's Brad Anderson who leads the MX1 standings*



takes victory in the opening race from Billy Mac's CAS Honda team-mate Cedric Melotte and MVR-D Suzuki's James Noble and then backs this up with a solid third in race two behind Carl Nunn and CCM Racing's Tom Church.

Langrish sees Red Bull KTM rider Max Nagl taking up a wildcard ride and the German quickly hits the front after overhauling fast-starting Osborne. Nagl's a hot tip for the world title this year and he looks every bit the contender as he controls the race from the front to claim a comfortable win from Melotte, Osborne and Anderson.

After the disappointment of round one Billy Mac's got a point to prove but the Scot suffers another first lap crash and can only push through to 12th at the flag.

Second time out though and Billy looks back to his blistering best as he moves past Osborne and streaks away, opening up a five-second gap on Nagl that he comfortably maintains. But in the closing stages the factory KTM man picks up the pace and on the final lap draws alongside as the pair hit a tabletop with the finishline almost in sight.

And it's Nagl who gets the power to the ground first as Billy catches the top of the downslope and goes over the bars, letting Gareth Swanepoel through into second followed by Osborne and Anderson.

So with two rounds done and dusted it's the new-look Mr Consistent Anderson who leads from Nunn and Noble and with Brampton – Brad's home track – next up on May 3 things are looking good for the PAR Homes Honda man.





# FIRST MUD!

THE OPENING GP OF THE SEASON SHOULD BE A SHOWCASE SPECTACLE FOR ALL THAT'S GREAT ABOUT WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MOTOCROSS – THEN IT STARTS TO RAIN...

Photos by Sarah Gutierrez and Magnus Andersson

**T**he first GP of 2009 should have been an absolute epic as the Faenza race track that's situated just south of the F1 venue of Imola is a fast and flowing typically Italian style of hardpack circuit that traditionally offers a plethora of exciting bar-to-bar racing action. That's unless it rains of course and then the sun-baked clay surface turns into slop which is exactly what happens for the opening round of the MX1 and MX2 world championships. It's all a bit of a farce really as the world's best motocross racers are made to look like raw novices in the opening two 35-minute plus two lap motos before common sense prevails and the second motos are cancelled on the grounds of safety.

But before all that goes off decent track conditions on Saturday show what the racing could have been like as the all-new format of qualification motos – for gate pick only as all the riders are now pre-qualified – get tested out. While in theory the two races for no points could be dead dull that's not actually the case as the riders really get into the spirit of things.

There's a surprise winner in the MX2 qualifier as Switzerland's Arnaud Tonus runs away from the pack with a flawless start-to-finish victory. French title prospect Steven Frossard overhauls our own Shaun Simpson for second while Davide Guarneri proves he's still got good pace and fantastic fitness by setting the fastest lap of the **moto right** in its very closing stages.

Victory in the MX1 qualifier goes the way of reigning MX1 champ David Philippaerts who beats Jonathan Barragan and Antonio Cairoli across the line in a race-long battle that sees the first three separated by just over half-a-second at the end of the 24-minute sprint! That's not the full story however as it's Josh Coppins who looks to have the race easily in the bag until he takes a massive p\*\*\*er two laps prior to the chequered flag being unfurled! Coppins eventually ends up with a classification of 31st place which is still five better than that of another pre-race favourite Max Nagl who easily won both motos at Faenza in the closing round of the 2008 series.

Although Saturday's motos will still dictate the order of gate pick as soon as the rain sets in and turns the perfectly prepped track into a perfectly useless pile of poop the formbook written in the

dry goes right out of the window.

By the time the gate drops for the opening MX2 moto the ground is awash with standing water and sewer-style slop. Frenchman Jeremy Tarroux yanks an impressive holey on the uphill start straight as his Beursfoen Suzuki gives him an awesome advantage into turn one. Shaun Simpson is second behind the Frenchman but after that it's hard to tell just who is who as brown guy after brown guy battles through the brown mess and brown handlebar deep ruts.

With less than a quarter of the lap complete Simpson dives headfirst into the dirt after kinda washing out in a long left-hander then burying the factory KTM's front wheel in a hellishly deep hole as his rear end kicks round. Simpson will crash at least twice more before the finish and the third spill is so severe it jams the KTM's killswitch with mud which means the young Scot has to push his bike back to the pits to get it fixed up. Re-entering the race many laps down Shaun soldiers on to an impressive – under the circumstances – 11th place finish.

At the front of the pack Tarroux falls foul of a sticky climb – for around 20 minutes – which allows Jeremy Van Horebeek to take over at the sharp end of the pack on his KTM as Nico Aubin and Red Bull KTM UK's Stephen Sword take chase, albeit some distance behind. Swordy's next to fall foul of the conditions though as he slips from third to 17th as he plants his 250SX-F deep into a hillside.

Fastest man on the track meanwhile is former European champ Gautier Paulin who – by using some interesting line selection as well as his extremely long legs – is powering through the pack like the proverbial hot knife through butter (© Murray Walker 1985). From 14th on lap one the Bud Racing Kawasaki teamster passes absolutely everyone to take control of the lead just two laps from home and claim his first ever moto and GP victory as well as take hold of the red plate for the first time in his short world championship career! Van Horebeek holds on for second while French beanpole Marvin Musquin toughs it out for third on the NGS Honda.

Three laps behind the podium finishers Jake Nicholls scores a career high 10th place after making an abysmal start to his GP season. "I crashed on the first lap quite heavily and

>>

© Sarah Gutierrez

Leok swears by regular mudpacks to make his complexion glow

© Magnus Andersson



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Estonian Express Tanel Leok kicks up a huge bow wave on his way to victory at Faenza

## SERIES STANDINGS

### MX1 >>

1	Tanel Leok	Yamaha Red Bull De Carli	25 points
2	Ken De Dycker	Teka Suzuki	22
3	Clement Desalle	LS Honda	20
4	Aigar Leok	TM Racing	18
5	Antonio Cairoli	Yamaha Red Bull De Carli	16
6	Josh Coppins	Yamaha Monster Energy	15
7	Max Nagl	Red Bull KTM	14
8	Tom Church	Buildbase CCM Racing	13
9	David Philippaerts	Yamaha Monster Energy	12
10	Jon Barragan	Silver Action KTM	11
11	Jason Dougan	Buildbase CCM Racing	10
18	James Noble	MVR-D Suzuki	3

### MX2 >>

1	Gautier Paulin	Bud Racing Kawasaki	25 points
2	Jeremy Van Horebeek	KTM Factory Junior Racing	22
3	Marvin Musquin	NGS Honda	20
4	Davide Guarneri	Yamaha Ricci Racing	18
5	Joel Roelants	KTM Factory Junior Racing	16
6	Alessandro Lupino	Yamaha Red Bull De Carli	15
7	Nicolas Aubin	Yamaha Ricci Racing	14
8	Marco Maddii	Suzuki	13
9	Valentin Teillet	KTM Factory Junior Racing	12
10	Jake Nicholls	Red Bull KTM UK	11
11	Shaun Simpson	Red Bull KTM	10
17	Stephen Sword	Red Bull KTM UK	4





*Marc De Reuver's hopes for an early championship lead sink beneath the Italian mud*



*David Vuillemin gives it Superman up the hill*

had to come in for more gloves and also to sort out the bars that were quite bent," says the Reverend. "I rode around doing laps and just trying to stay on the bike. I kept circulating and ended 10th – it was my best finish and perhaps lucky in some ways but well-earned in others. I didn't crash when everyone else was bailing."

Youthstream have their fair share of bailing out to do too before the opening MX1 gambit as the Faenza circuit is strewn with stricken 250Fs but once the course is cleared it's Steve Ramon who jumps out into an early lead in the MX1 moto with KTM's Max Nagl and Jon Barragan right there in the mix. Ramon only leads for two tours before getting stuck on Hamburger Hill which allows Dutchman Marc De Reuver to take control on the Martin Honda. De Reuver holds the lead position for four further laps until he too adds to the colossal amounts of carnage on the now almost blocked uphill climb!

"I didn't win the lottery today," jokes Marc. "I was doing well and it looked like the race might be mine but I went sideways on a hill and the bike's footpeg got caught on the pipe for the sprinkler system. I then had so much mud on the hand grips that I could not turn the throttle. I had to get some of the banners at the side of the track to clean the bars. This GP was worse than Spain last year."

With De Reuver out of the running it's Estonian hardman Tanel Leok who stamps his authority on the remainder of the race to take just the second GP win of his career. "It was a matter of survival out there today and I did just that," says Tanel who'll now wear the series leader's red plate for the first time in his career at round two in Bulgaria. "It was important not to stop out there and I had some luck because nobody crashed in front of me but my approach was to always keep the bike rolling."

Second in the race over one minute behind

the Estonian is Teka Suzuki's freak of nature Ken De Dycker who comes paddling through the pack on his immaculately prepared factory Suzuki after not getting off to the greatest of starts. Keeno actually ends lap one in 27th place but scythes his way through the slipping and sliding pack to take the silver medal position on the final lap.

Although he loses out on the runner-up spot in the dying moments there's one man who's definitely enjoying the inclement weather and that's the MX Panda – Clement Desalle. The up n' coming Belgian star hangs on to score a career best third on the LS Honda in his rookie ride for the team at world championship level.

Best of the Brits is Buildbase CCM Racing's Tom Church who scores an awesome eighth place on his CMX450. Team-mate Jason Dougan is 11th while James Noble is the last of the points scoring Brits in 18th. But what about Billy Mac?

"I was getting filled in everywhere and there was no dodging the roost," says the sore-eyed Scotsman. "I had a standard seat on the bike and it was impossible to stay on it – I was 'Superman' everywhere when I got on the gas. I approached a hill and veered to the left and got stuck. It was so deep I could not move. It took four guys to fish the bike out. Everything was covered in mud so I did my best to try and make the finish."

"It is a bit of a nightmare start to the season, as it is for a few other people I guess. I am very happy they cancelled the second moto. I think today was the most ridiculous thing I have ever done. The mud was so thick it was sticking to the bike and making it really heavy. Perhaps the results from the first moto should not have even counted because so many people were cutting the track and there was a lot of outside assistance."



*Max Nagl struggles to seventh*



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# PAGE



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## MAKING TRACKS!

BSMA BAND OF BROTHERS BLAST OFF

## EARLY RISERS!

THE BOYS TO BEAT SHOW THEIR SKILLS AS  
MX2 AND BYMX BATTLES GET UNDER WAY

BEN WATSON



# EARLY RISERS!

THE BOYS TO BEAT ARE ALREADY SHOWING THEIR SKILLS  
AS THE MXY2 AND BYMX BATTLES GET UNDER WAY

If you're really looking to crank up the confidence levels and send out a message of intent to the opposition early season there's no better place to be doing it from than the podium steps at one of the major youth championships.

In the top-flight of the youth ranks during the month of March Josh Waterman, Luke Hawkins and James Hutchinson all revealed their hands to devastating effect, firstly ripping out a blistering pace at Langrish. The opening round of this year's MXY2 series was the first time this season that a number of the big guns had gathered. Heavy broadsides from Waterman and especially Hawkins stole the show and sunk the opposition as they grabbed a 1-2 moto result each to jointly lead the championship.

Connor Walkley was the second member of the ACU Academy team to make the podium steps in third place, all helped by a kicking second race performance. It was totally cruel luck however for UTAG Yamaha's Brad Pocock, the other Academy squad member, as he sustained a broken leg in race one that will sideline him for some months to come. Hang in there Brad – everyone is really looking forward to your return later in the season when I'm sure you will be kicking a little you know what!

Moto One's James Hutchinson went a different route around Langrish, circulating to good points-scoring effect in adult MX2 action. With his lap times a smidge faster than Hawkins' or Waterman's on the day expectations were soaring for a real High Noon showdown at BYMX Mildenhall. Showdown? What showdown?

It all started to go really pear-shaped early doors with Luke getting a PAR taxi home after just one race – it appears he was still suffering from a mid-week training accident. And then to

cap it all James Hutchinson crashed out big style after clearing Mildenhall's tabletop and not exactly landing sunnyside-up somewhere almost in the next county. Before the crunch Jimmy Hutch had been running riot, twice planting impressive calling cards in the Suffolk dirt with supercharged race wins and he was well on his way to a third.

So with the top rank really bombed out – no Pocock, no Hawkins, no Hutchinson and no Scott James to worry about together with Connor Walkley suffering machine problems – Josh Waterman duly piloted the Danger UK KTM superbly to the top, carding the final two moto wins in the process. Josh Spinks came home in second place overall at Mildenhall after taking the opening moto win. Josh's result followed up a goodish day out at Langrish but one that could have been a whole lot better if he hadn't slipped off in the closing stages of race two when handily placed for a major points score.

Dropping down a peg into the Big Wheels and it looks very much like Nathan Watson has decided this year it's his turn to grab a share of the family headlines. At the close of racing everyone thought that with three stunning race victories over the weekend he had secured the overall glory. But the rulebook came out to hand him a penalty minute that dropped him back to 12th position in race four after crossing the line fifth. Over-enthusiastic pit boarding/ outside assistance by his crew was the adjudged misdemeanour that left Nathan just a single point adrift of a winning total.

The court of public opinion in and around the paddock however thought that decision was particularly harsh and the rulebook should have stayed firmly in the pocket this time around.

So on the podium steps at the end of the day

Henry Williams  
grabs a race win



Robert Davidson (#74)  
and Ben Watson (#99) go  
bar-to-bar for the holeshot  
in the SW85 division



# MAKING TRACKS!

BSMA BAND OF BROTHERS BLAST OFF

**T**he BSMA band of brothers – Southern-based riders who stay dedicated and totally loyal to the cause – struck a real blow for the little guy and the underdog at WildTracks when Jordan Divall got the better of Matthew Fleming and James Dunn over five races in the Big Wheels, Jake Deacon proved that he could be the new Junior hotshot this season and Ben Beadle almost snatched victory from Ollie Osmaston's grasp at the opening youth national of the season.

"By god that Honda's quick down the back straight!" was an exclamation overheard by yours truly from the Fleming camp – but they weren't talking about Matty's machine, they were salivating over the performance and speed of Jordan Divall.

Jordan has a reputation of being something of a holed-up supremo and that together with his local track knowledge propelled him to two rapid race wins and the overall honours. The best race of the five for me though came in the final offering on day one as James Dunn and Fleming had the watchers dashing from one side of the track to the other just to see what was happening next as they went bar-to-bar from gate-to-flag. At the death Dunn proved

with the closest of race wins he can be as quick and tough as anyone in the division this year.

In the previous race on the Saturday card Ollie Osmaston and Liam Knight ran them close for the performance of the meeting award with both guys ripping through the field in a spellbinding full-on display. In real contrast to the exuberance and edginess of Osmaston and especially Liam Knight, Ben Beadle went about his task in a different way and with a 1-4-3-3-3 card he almost stole the day, losing out at the death to Ollie in a last race decider.

In the Junior 65cc ranks Conrad Mewse stood on the highest podium step at the end of the meeting but it could so easily have been Jake Deacon with three of the five race wins – and that could well have been four if it hadn't been for a final race mistake. After the opening tussle there doesn't seem to be much between these two fliers. The battle for the ultimate Junior 65cc red plate is one to watch with round two kicking off at Landrake in the Elite series.

In the Seniors division with Luke Dean sidelined David Sweet and Aaron Jenner took it upon themselves to carve up the chequered flag cake – at the close of play it all ended 3-2 in Aaron's favour.



**James Hutchinson  
crashes out  
at Mildenhall**

it was Danger UK's Rip and Roll Ryan Houghton with one race win standing tallest following a hard fought weekend generally spent coming from the back in glorious style. But with a pack of hungry chasers including Watson, race winner James Dunn, Sunny Thompson and Matty Fleming close on his heels this is definitely becoming the section with the X Factor spectator appeal. One more top-flight injury to report in this section as Jamie McCanney took a mulling in race two of Saturday's action following a cracking third place finish first time out.

A stroll in the Small Wheel park? Well not quite! But not far off in reality as Ben Watson went five from five in armchair mode on the gorgeous 150F Pro Circuit Honda. Behind Ben it was pretty tight with Tom Neal just about getting a classy nod over Connor Clarke, Robert Davidson and Callan Cooper.

Conrad Mewse is another guy building up a head of steam. His second overall national win in consecutive weeks in the Junior division will do nicely thank you very much and it was a fantastic way to get the year rolling.

Henry Williams almost proved to be a party pooper with a strong weekend show that included one race win – if Team Williams decide to do the whole series they won't be far away from ultimate glory come the autumn if the Mildenhall showing is anything to judge by.

Elsewhere in the section one race win from Aaron Piper showed his potential and Jamie Carpenter together with Dan Knight proved to be in really good nick yet again – just as they were at WildTracks the week before in BSMA action.



**SW winner  
Ollie Osmaston**



**Jordan Divall wins in  
the Big Wheel class**



**BW85cc sensation  
Nathan Watson**



**Jake Deacon (#21) ruffles  
Conrad Mewse's feathers**



**Small Wheel  
runner-up  
Ben Beadle**





"Getting the Holeshot is 50% of any race!"

"If you don't get away with the top three of five, you have lost 15 seconds or so by the end of the first lap, not to mention getting filled in with roost and having to pass a lot of other crazy fast riders". *Shaun Simpson*

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# THE DEAN MACHINE!

LUKE TAKES A UNIQUE APPROACH TO STEPPING UP TO THE MAXXIS

**W**ith the opening rounds of the Masters, BSMA, BYMX and MX2 series already recorded in the history books it's interesting to note that one of the early season stand-out individual youth performances came at an event that isn't specifically designed for youths.

The MCF Silkolene British two-stroke championship opener at Mildenhall was the venue and Luke Dean is the name in the frame, slamming down an impressive early season marker by taking the Junior section along with the majority of the Expert rank and file well and truly to the cleaners.

The writing was on the wall as early as timed training when 14-year-old Luke posted the second fastest lap time, just a fraction of a second behind the eventual race day winner David Willet. In real time race action Luke ran away with the Junior section and carried on putting the frighteners on the Expert runners to such a degree that Deano is quite confident he can be showing them all the way home by the end of the series.

Over the past two seasons Luke has been on a fast track course to success but after missing out on ACU Academy selection in '07 and again in '08 (and it really looks like the powers-that-be have let one slip through the net) Team Dean have mapped out a route for this term that sidesteps youth competition to a large degree by concentrating the majority of the effort on the MCF two-stroke series.

The aim over the next 12 months is set squarely at an early debut into Maxxis competition, ideally in 2010 at just 15 years old. By their own admission Team Deano know all too well they need to beef-up mentally, physically and tactically in preparation for the Maxxis.

The various options on offer at the start of this year were to either stay put on 85cc machinery in Big Wheels like the vast majority of Luke's age group or go 250F a year early – but neither option really ticked the boxes when it came to providing the required learning curve that Luke needs at this point in his racing career. But when Stevens of Devozes came along with an offer to ride a 125cc Yamaha in the two-stroke series coupled up with an extra kit deal from Answer clothing and Diadora the way forward became all too clear.

As a variation on the theme as to which route to take into adult racing the Team Dean way could well prove to be a bit of a masterplan for them in keeping the fast track process going and it highlights just how flexible the road to the senior ranks is becoming with the addition of MCF events to the calendar.

Chatting to Luke recently before a shot was fired at the opening round of the BSMA season, the confidence and bounce of a guy on top form was all too plain to see and hear. The exuberance however has been put on hold during the past few weeks with Luke recovering from a broken ankle collected during the opening lap of practice at the WildTracks gig in an innocuous looking incident. I guess that one just about highlights the ups and downs of motocross life.

The second round of the MCF two-stroke championship at Cusces Gorse could well be a case of damage limitation if the ankle isn't 100 per cent but by the time round three comes around Deano will be back on track and looking to rattle a few more well-established cages.

# MAX!

WINNERS ARE GRINNERS AND LOSERS ARE JUST PLAIN SORE AS YOUNG MASTER ANSTIE FINDS OUT TO HIS COST

Words by Max Anstie

**P**icking up where we left off we travelled up to the high desert for a successful weekend at Competitive Edge for the Gold Cup series. The whole D&M KTM team and I had a run out up there to prepare ourselves before the Nationals in Texas.

Racing went well for all of us and the very next day we were back in the gym training and working hard for the Nationals. Heading out to our local tracks around Cali, I was throwing down some fast times and we rode quite a bit with Tommy which has definitely been good fun, especially at Glen Helen where we battled it out.

For the two weeks after Comp Edge until we boarded our plane to Dallas TX we were basically training, testing and riding all the time until we found ourselves at the Lake Whitney circuit about an hour south of Dallas lining up against the fastest in the country! Whitney reminds me of racing back in Europe with the way there are no doubles and the track is very fast. You have to really think about your lines and really be smooth to make time. Especially when it gets rough – which it certainly did after two days of rain!

The weather and track conditions seemed to favour me as most of these American Nationals are flat and wide open but here you had to think. The week turned out to be a great success and I managed to take home three championships and win seven out of eight motos! My confidence was rising and my speed was coming along with it.

Then rumours started to swirl around the pits. The first one was that one of my competitors (not mentioning any names) was going to try and claim my bike. Now at AMA races there's a rule that if you want to buy someone else's bike you can do it 30 minutes after the race by putting down 30 per cent more than the retail price in cash – Chatfield did it to Alessi back when they were on 80s.

We were also accused of having more horsepower than everyone else but no-one put down the money to protest. I had the same motor in Mini Os and funnily enough when I wasn't on top no-one had a problem. Just for the record all you Anderson fans, Jason has the same engine as me. Don't forget you still have to ride the things!

There were even more rumours going around and we were said to have much more support than everyone else on the KTM Factory Junior team. Another funny thing was an official grabbed my helmet from Devin's hands to check for earpieces – I guess they just can't figure out why I was going so quick. I don't work for M16 guys!

Which leads us on to Oakhill which is a little sandier than Whitney but with more rhythm and optional sections the track becomes quite technical. Everything was going awesome! I had ended up on top in nearly all of my heat races and was riding great. It was one of my last heat races before the mains and I had the likes of Tomac, Anderson and Vincent in my heat. I got off to an okay start and was in about fifth on the first lap. I quickly made my way around Tomac to move into the second spot behind Anderson. Over the next two laps I closed in on Anderson until on the last lap I was on him like a dog on a mailman's leg and before the whoop section he went out wide and seizing the opportunity I dived into the inside rut.

As we went round the corner he got a little cross-rutted and coming out of the corner he clipped my back wheel sending him into the embankment on the side of the track which eventually ended in him going down. I rounded the last few turns to take the win and that's when things hit the roof!

The next part of the story is the most flattery I've ever had in my life! When I first exited the track to go to the interview station I saw my dad and Devin giving me a thumbs up, next thing I knew the camera was off me and on them because Anderson's parents were, er, kicking off!

While I was away from the truck a bunch of drama happened which left Dev getting life-flighted out because of the baby (she is 13 weeks pregnant) and me getting disqualified from the whole event! That's right – the whole thing! I really was bummed I didn't get to finish the week but all-in-all I had a great time and learned a lot from the last two weeks. Winning takes work and I am glad I have such a great team of people supporting my efforts whom I would like to thank right now – that's my dad, Devin, Kurt Nicoll, Juan my mechanic and Leighton Rice.

I look forward to a long future with KTM and I know that no matter what people might say after all this drama KTM have the best team, best bikes, best mechanics...





**T**his column will mostly be written by the voice inside my head – you know, my subconscious if you will. Basically all my thoughts about stuff that I don't actually say out loud!

So it starts here as I sit down to write my column...  
*"Aww man, do I really have to tell my story from the weekend? Are the readers even interested? They probably are, they probably wanna know what the hell went on. But what if everyone just thinks I'm making excuses? What a s\*\*t weekend!"*

Well here we go, it's the night before I have to get up and make my way to the airport.

*"God! I gotta get up at half four in the morning to catch this flight, Stansted too! Why not East Midlands? Would be so much easier. Jenni's (team PR girl) to blame! Ah well, best set the alarm and get some sleep. Yawn! Hmm, how do you even fall asleep? When do you know you're falling asleep? Where are my eyes right now behind my eyelids? Are they up or down or looking straight forward? Don't open your eyes Billy cos then you won't get to sleep, you have to have your eyes shut to be able to sleep!"*

I fall asleep somehow but next thing I get rudely awakened by my phone ringing and the voice starts talking. I must be awake! Or half asleep...

*"Ughh, that'll be Mark. Is he here already? My alarm hasn't even gone off...oh there it goes...wait a minute, did he deliberately wait until 7.45 to call or is that just when he called? The same time as my alarm, his phone must be a minute fast, or mine is a minute slow, whatever!"*

I get out of bed and get changed cos all my stuff is packed in the van already, all I need to do is get in and drive. I planned this the night before so I didn't forget anything in my sleepy daze from my bed to the van! Mark from K-Tech suspension has met me at my house so we can both drive down together. We jump in the van

and get started! The voice comes back!

*"Why do I have to drive? I drove last time. Ughh, I'm tired, it's freezing in here too, I'll put the heater on...and some music. I should make Mark drive, it's only fair, he hasn't drove before and I've drove the last two times. Ach, just get on with it, I can't be doing with conversation this early in the morning!"*

After the terrible two-hour drive all the way to Stansted we get in the terminal and get ourselves checked in. It all goes pretty smoothly and not very interesting thoughts go through my head...

*"That girl's hot, that guy looks weird, what queue should I go in, do I have time to have breakfast?"*

I fall asleep the whole way on the plane – an easy sleep too knowing there's nothing to wake up for or worry about when we land, just making our way to the track. We get in the car and we're on our way. Harry is driving and I'm thinking...

*"Glad I'm not driving, I'm still tired. Yawn! Mmmm, I need to start getting hydrated for the weekend, we'll need to stop soon and stock up on water. Why doesn't Harry put the radio on? Ah well, he's the driver, he gets to decide. Maybe he doesn't like the radio or maybe he doesn't know how to turn it on? Ah well, it's prob crap anyway, I'll just chuck my iPod on! Ah yes, good tunes! I feel happy!"*

Lots of tunes later...

*"Man this is taking forever, are we there yet? Should I say that out loud and be funny? Will they laugh?"*

So I shout out 'are we there yet?' and there's a little bit of a giggle...

*"It worked, I lightened the mood! But seriously, why the hell is this taking so long? Where did we even land? I thought the whole point of this exercise was to find airports closest to your destination! Jenni's fault! What was she thinking? Ah, I want to kill her! Not actually kill her...well maybe? No, that's bad, don't think like that!"*

Harry suggests we stop for lunch.

*"Good idea, I'm starving and I need to get some water. I hope they have food I can eat in this place. Potatoes would be nice and some meat."*

We arrive at the track and I'm bursting for a pish! Harry is driving slowly and there are vans everywhere.

*"Just get in the pits, come on! Pass the van on the left, just go for it. Ah man, I need to go real bad! Just wait til you get to the truck. Could you drive any slower Harry! Argh! Oh here we go, head nodding to every single person in the pits, saying hi to people that I hardly even know, I just wanna go to the toilet! Where's the van? Drive faster Harry, knock everyone over!"*

Finally we come to a stop but we can't find our way to the truck. I have to get out but we're in some dumb American car which won't let the doors open without the car being in park mode. So I'm pulling at the door and nothing is happening, I'm getting all stressed and already got a sweat on from holding it in so long! I get out eventually and feel a whole lot better about myself as I release some very clean looking urine.

The rest of the day goes pretty smoothly, not a lot of thoughts running through my head as I'm kept busy having a laugh with the team and my good old mechanic Teasy. Just checking the bike out, looking at the track, avoiding eye contact with everyone!

Saturday arrives and I gotta get up and get changed. Again there's nothing much going through my head. It's all routine, been doing it for years now. You get up, get changed and get on the bike! The track was in really good condition, too good actually – it was really fast and the times were really close. I'm out doing my laps and there's a few little voices talking to me...

*"Bike feels good today considering I ain't been riding a whole lot recently, ribs are feeling good from that crash at Langrish too. Hmmm, maybe this isn't gonna be as tough as I thought! Just find some good lines*



# THOUGHT PROCESS!

EVER WONDERED WHAT GOES THROUGH THE MIND OF BILLY MACKENZIE DURING A GP WEEKEND? WELL YOU'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT...

Words by Billy MacKenzie Photos by Suttty



and enjoy it, the track is sweet!"

I bust out a few laps and I'm in the top 10. I feel all right about it but I know there's a few places on the track where I can go faster. I wanted to at least be in the top six – that's when I feel good about things.

"Right, let's do this, concentrate, hit those lines, feed the clutch, jump far on the downhill, put the lap together, all of it!"

I set off past the startline...

"Switch to the left and manual it over the whoops up this hill. Wow! This is fast! I just got that sweet! Launch this ski jump! Jump far into the corner! Stay on the pegs! Launch the triple! Ah yes, that was cool! I bet that would've been a cool picture! Land on the gas, quarter throttle the whole way round! Keep balanced in the rut, get the drive and switch left so I can carry more speed round the right...perfect! Bounce the bike over the crest of the hill, power all the way to the end of the rut! Tweak the bars off the drop off, get the wheels on the ground and get the power ON! This is the section I need to get right...oh...yes, I got it! Stand up and push the bike through the ground, get the traction right up the hill! Ah man this is gonna be a good lap!"

I launch down the big hill, jump way past the actual landing and down the left so I can sweep into the right-hander...

"Remember this rut is deep, don't go too hard into it, you'll catch your pegs, yes! Sweet! Stand up round both these corners, the rut will hold me, quarter throttle again, FLAT OUT! Ah man the bike is working sweet, so much grip! Jump far again, then jump on the angle so you can double the next two bumps...man this is gonna be good! Over the next couple of tabletops and into the mechanics' corner..."

I see Teasy hanging over the pit box cheering me on, I know he's excited about something!

"The lap must be good, I wonder how good? Keep focused! Just two corners left, brake hard into both of them and get on the power as soon as the brakes are off, keep it wide open past the line! Done it! Ah well, that was fun, wonder what my time was? I'll just chill this lap and have a look at the lines before I get to the pit box..."

I went pole! Now even though it was a good lap I really didn't expect it. I've had such a crap couple of months with no bike time, crashes and injuries, then at the first GP of the year, first practice, I come out and go pole! I think to myself...

"How does that happen? Like really, what the hell is going on that I can go do that? It just doesn't make sense! Ah well, ha ha ha ha ha ha ha ha! Mega! I feel good about that one! Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha!"

Everyone in the team is happy, Harry is beaming! The voice creeps in...

"Everyone is feeling good, I made them all feel good, that's made me feel good! Ah, I'm a nice boy really. Sweet, I'm in for a good weekend!"

The next practice is pre-qualifying practice. Again, I just wanted a top six, it was only for the start position after all. But I'll stick to my same lines, I know they work and my time was fast in last practice so just do the same lap again and things will be cool, even if I don't get it completely right it should still put me top six.

I end the session in 15th place...

"Grrrrrrrrrrrr! WTF! How does that happen? First to 15th? Ach, I don't get it! S\*\*t sport! One minute you're up, the next you're down! Ah well, it's done now and 15th is still a good gate pick, the start is pretty fair. I

just dunno how I didn't get higher though, I had a good lap in that one too! There is only 0.600 of a second from 15th to second though so don't be too hard on yourself, just get focused for the race!"

The qualifying race went sweet. I got a terrible start – mostly my reactions – and I was way back in 18th round the first corner and only 15th by the first lap. The track was so fast and there wasn't a lot of places to make up time with the times being so close but I just gritted my teeth and went for it. I was in the mode! Making passes everywhere and passing good people before settling in for sixth place. I didn't wanna make any mistakes like normal and throw away a good start position so I brought her home and the team were happy again! Yay!

Race day arrives and it's p\*\*\*\*\*g down. I'm not really too bothered cos I thought the race would be a little easier with the track being slowed down. Cos it was super-fast on the Saturday it woulda been real close racing, at least now it might make it a bit more technical and space everyone out a bit. But the rain kept coming and coming and it was just a mess!

Well it turned into an absolute nightmare, I lost my goggles at the top of the hill – like maybe only 400 metres from the startline! Every time I got close to someone I got completely filled in. I forgot to put a grippy seat cover on and for me this was the worst mistake I'd ever made! I could not for the life of me get up any of the hills without falling off the back of the bike – it was impossible! I got stuck for five laps in some massive rut and it took four guys with posts through the wheels to pull it out...

I'm not gonna even tell you the thoughts that went through my head!

*Handwritten signature: Billy MacKenzie*



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